

The Comintern and the East

*The Struggle
for the Leninist Strategy
and Tactics
in National
Liberation Movements*

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PREFACE

This book surveys one of the most important aspects of the activity of the Communist International, an historically determined and essential form of the existence and struggle of the international communist movement during the initial stages of its development. It treats of the basic issues of its anti-imperialist policy in the colonial East which was initiated by the founder of the organisation V. I. Lenin.

The Comintern was founded after the greatest event of the 20th century, the Great October Socialist Revolution, whose influence on the course of world history has been immeasurable indeed. In particular, it has had a tremendous impact on the liberation movement of the peoples of the East which began to score irreversible victories. Uninterrupted support for the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples by Soviet Russia and then by the whole socialist community connects the victory of the October Revolution with the national liberation of dozens of colonial countries. The October Revolution paved the way for the rise and development of the communist movement in the East. In this process an outstanding role was played by the Communist International. It effectively contributed to the unification of the communist elements in the oppressed countries, played an indispensable part in arming the emergent Communist parties in the East with Marxist-Leninist theory, and helped them to chart their strategy and tactics and their policy of forming alliances with the non-proletarian anti-imperialist forces.

Lenin was the organiser, ideological leader and theoretician of the Third Communist International. After the collapse of the Second International which had relegated the interests of the international working class to oblivion he was the first to raise the question about the need to found the Third Communist International on a new party, political and organisational basis. He projected this organisation as the co-ordinating centre of the revolutionary struggle of genuine internationalist proletarian revolutionaries. He set this task during the First World War in connection with the trend towards a world socialist revolution, and, above all, towards a proletarian revolution in Russia whose approach he envisaged and for which he vigorously prepared. His analysis of imperialism as the eve of socialist revolution, his elaboration of the ways and the general laws of the world revolutionary process and its main motive forces, his conclusion concerning the uneven political and economic development of capitalism in the imperialist epoch and the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country prior to victory of socialism in many countries, his teaching about the party of the working class, the methods of winning the masses to the side of the Communist parties, and the principles of strategy and tactics of socialist revolution became the theoretical, political and organisational basis for the activities of the Comintern and its sections.

As the head of the Comintern's collective leadership Lenin guided the organisation's activities in the post-October period when the proletariat launched an assault on imperialist citadels in the West and there was a powerful upsurge of the struggle of the oppressed peoples against imperialist domination throughout the colonial East.

An unsurpassed strategist and tactician of the socialist revolution he was thoroughly versed in the laws governing the rise and development of objective factors and skilled in preparing subjective factors of a revolutionary situation and using them with the view to turning a revolutionary situation into a victorious revolution.

The Comintern in the course of almost a quarter of a century of its activity irrefutably proved that Marxism-Leninism provided revolutionary strategy and tactics both

for the proletariat fighting for social emancipation and for the oppressed peoples of the East fighting for national independence.

Nothing influenced the development of the revolutionary movement more than Lenin's speeches at the Second Congress of the Comintern (1920) on the national and colonial question, and his book *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, an outstanding contribution to the scientific theory of the communist movement, a guide to action for the Communist and Workers' parties throughout the world. This book became particularly important for the working-class and communist movement in the East, which was in the process of formation at the time. Of immense theoretical and political significance were Lenin's speeches on the national question at the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B) and the Second All-Russia Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, and his reports and speeches at the Third and Fourth Congresses of the Comintern in which he expounded the problem of the national revolutions in the colonies.

The problem of a united anti-imperialist front occupied a central place in the Comintern's theoretical and practical work on the national and colonial question. Lenin first expounded the idea of the unity of all the anti-imperialist forces at the Second Congress of the Comintern. He emphasised that the international communist movement united in the Comintern had to fight for the unity of action of all revolutionary forces, namely the liberation movement of the proletariat in the developed capitalist countries, the liberation struggle of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies, and the world's first state of the victorious proletariat, the Soviet Republic, round which all the motive forces of the socialist international revolution against imperialism were rallying. He emphatically condemned any underestimation of the role of the oppressed peoples in the struggle against imperialism. It was Lenin who showed that at the imperialist stage of the development of capitalism the colonial and semi-colonial peoples become a powerful force, they cease to be an object of history and become its subject and can, and actually do, become the allies of the socialist proletariat. In this connection it should be

noted that Lenin worked to turn the Comintern into a truly world-wide organisation, an association which should also include representatives of the communist movement in the countries of the East. And the Comintern became such an organisation.

Lenin's idea about the unity and indissolubility of all the components of the revolutionary process, of all the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist forces, was the basic principle underlying the Comintern's guiding activity. The well-springs of this great and fruitful idea possessed of enormous-dynamic force are to be found in some of Lenin's early works on the national liberation struggle prior to the First World War, and, particularly, in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

The idea of the unity of the forces of socialism and the national liberation movement became crystallised, was developed both theoretically and politically and spread throughout the world precisely at the turning point in history, when the oppressed peoples of the colonies, semi-colonies and dependencies inspired by the Great October Socialist Revolution launched an active anti-imperialist struggle.

The idea of the unity of the working class in the capitalist countries and oppressed colonial peoples in the struggle for the elimination of imperialism was practically embodied in the very nature of the activities conducted by the Comintern which, as distinct from the First and Second Internationals, immediately became a truly world-wide organisation embracing Communists of all countries, nations and races.

It was not only a question of the Communists of the oppressor and oppressed countries co-operating in the organisation in keeping with the principles of international comradeship, fraternity and solidarity, which in itself was a new and unusual development compared with the practices and traditions of the Second International and its leaders who wallowed in chauvinism and conciliation with the bourgeoisie. The most important thing was that in evolving and implementing its strategy and tactics, the Comintern, in line with Lenin's teaching, regarded the colonial peoples of the East, which at the time comprised a gigantic majority of the world population, a major and most massive rev-

olutionary force allied with the international proletariat and capable of opposing imperialism jointly with Soviet Russia, the only socialist country at the time, and with the entire international working class. In its practical activity the Comintern did its utmost to develop and strengthen the struggle of the oppressed peoples of the East against imperialism and, consequently, their contribution to the world revolutionary process.

Lenin's idea of a united anti-imperialist front had another very important aspect. It orientated the Communists on the struggle for the cohesion of all the forces of the oppressed nations capable of opposing imperialism, the main opponent of the revolution at its current stage. This was an outstanding contribution to the theory and strategy of the international communist movement. Many Communists thought that the national bourgeoisie in the East would be just as incapable of countering the imperialist domination, as the bourgeoisie of Russia was unable to come out against the autocracy. According to such notions the national bourgeoisie of the East, owing to its very nature, was an ally of imperialism and an opponent of the liberation movement of its peoples. Therefore, they reasoned, the revolution in the East should from the very outset strike out not only against imperialism, but also against the national bourgeoisie. In other words, it had to acquire a socialist character from the very beginning.

Lenin showed the unscientific and sectarian nature of such conceptions. Taking full account of the contradictions between the national-bourgeois forces and imperialism, he said that the formation of an anti-imperialist alliance with the bourgeois democracy in the colonies and semi-colonies was one of the key tasks confronting the Communists. Of course, as Lenin saw it, the alliance with the national bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism ought not and could not be everlasting and self-sufficing. The Marxist-Leninist party, the party of the working class, needed this alliance in the first place in order to break through to the broadest masses of the oppressed peasantry, the main ally of the working class in the East.

Internationally and nationally Lenin's idea of a united anti-imperialist front was of truly epochal significance. The

concrete forms of the realisation of this idea changed with time. In some countries, for instance, the national bourgeoisie broke away from the national front. This was only natural, for in countries which take the road of socialist transformations, the bourgeoisie cannot act together with the forces fighting for social emancipation. But the kernel of Lenin's idea about a united front, namely the conclusion that in the struggle against imperialism and then against national capitalism, all forces which are objectively concerned with bringing about their downfall should stand united, has been and still is the main definitive element in the strategic course of the communist movement in the East.

The idea of a united front permeated the theoretical and practical activity of the Comintern, as is witnessed among other things by the decisions of its Second, Fourth and Seventh Congresses, its policy in the Indonesian and Chinese questions and its united anti-fascist front strategy in the latter half of the 1930s. Naturally, it was not always possible to ascertain exactly what forces could be drawn into the united front, and some wrong decisions were made. It was presumed, for instance, that the Indian national bourgeoisie had allegedly lost its anti-imperialist potentialities already by the close of the 1920s; that Gandhi who opposed a forcible revolution and considered that India's national liberation could be achieved by increasing pressure on British imperialism was acting in the latter's interests; that the national reformists were the worst enemies of the liberation movement in the oppressed countries, etc. These miscalculations originating from an incorrect assessment of the state and prospects of the revolutionary movement were made at the end of 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. These notions proved to be incorrect, and the Comintern rejected them during its general shift towards securing the cohesion of all anti-fascist and anti-imperialist forces. The Comintern did not discard the idea of a united front at any time and under any circumstances. But being an organisation which followed uncharted roads and operated in a complex and rapidly changing situation it could not avoid certain miscalculation and errors in analysing the concrete situation and in defining the necessary forms of a united front.

As an international proletarian organisation operating in the colonial world, the Comintern came face to face with many formerly unknown problems. Its entire activity in the colonial East was a determined quest for new directions and roads which would lead the national liberation movement to victory over imperialism. The main line which it elected to pursue during the quarter of a century of its existence was one of struggling for the unity of the anti-imperialist forces on the basis of the application of the general laws of the Marxist-Leninist theory to the original national, socio-economic, cultural and historic conditions under which the countries of the East were developing. The Comintern could not evolve a correct line *a priori*; it could do so only in the course of a revolutionary struggle, in the flames of anti-imperialist uprisings and national revolutionary wars with which the post-October 1920s and 1930s abounded. Under these conditions the Comintern could not escape errors, some of them serious, which it could remedy only by critically analysing its own experience. At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, for example, elements of sectarianism appeared in the activity of the Comintern and its sections in the East. For a while this made a gap in the united front of the proletarian and bourgeois-democratic forces in the national liberation movement. The harmful, impeding influence of sectarianism in that period was overcome in the mid-1930s.

It should be noted that the Leninist policy of a united front of the working class in the capitalist West and of a united front of all anti-imperialist forces in the colonial East and their alliance with the world's first proletarian state, the tactics of unity of all the components of the world revolutionary process, which was worked out in the course of the revolutionary struggle conducted by the Comintern and its sections, is of historic significance, and as life has shown, is designed to cover a very long historical epoch—the epoch of mankind's transition from capitalism, and for many economically backward countries, from “pre-capitalism”, to socialism.

Lenin, who always strongly emphasised that a relentless fight against right-wing opportunism was essential for the creation and successful development of Communist parties,

also noted the danger of sectarianism and leftist extremism in the young Communist parties. His fight against M. N. Roy's concept at the Second Congress of the Comintern, for instance, was aimed in the first place against left deviation and sectarianism. It should be borne in mind that these phenomena which were widespread in the young communist movement in the East (and in the West, too, for that matter) were not an historical fortuity. In the East sectarianism and "leftism" were nurtured by the weakness of the proletariat in the countries that had just taken the capitalist road, by the desire of the revolutionaries who had only started to shift to Marxist positions instantaneously to put an end to national and social oppression, and by the lack of practical experience. Lenin was fully aware that the transition of the more consistent revolutionaries of the East to Marxist positions was a difficult process. He was most attentive to the young Communists of the East and directed them onto the Marxist path displaying maximum patience and helping them to realise their mistakes. The fact that he entered into a discussion with Roy at the Second Congress of the Comintern proved that he not only attached great importance to the struggle against left deviation and sectarianism but also that he had set himself the task of *educating* the young revolutionaries of the East who had turned to scientific socialism. Roy was a typical representative of a group of functionaries who, in spite of their inherent "infantile disorder of 'Leftism'", made an important contribution to the formation of the communist movement in the oppressed countries and by their activity helped it resolutely to break away from national reformism and other non-communist trends.

By his entire activity Lenin showed how to educate the young Communists, explain to them the substance of scientific socialism and help them draw the necessary lessons from their own experience. Perhaps the vestiges of "leftism" which could be found in Roy's theses at the Second Congress of the Comintern remained in the document even after it had been edited by Lenin, simply because he believed that patience, thorough explanatory work and certain concessions were essential in the process of educating young Communists. Still, it could only be a question of nec-

essary concessions on matters of *secondary importance*: after their approval by the Congress Roy's theses were to be, and, in fact, became a decision of the international communist forum and thus acquired a guiding and directing force. Lenin deleted from the theses some sharply leftist premises, which more than others clashed with the theoretical and strategic principles of the communist movement. He did this with the approval of the delegates. There could be no question of Lenin making concessions on *fundamental* issues whose solution could substantially influence the future of the communist and national liberation movement.

The revolutionary activity of the Communist International and its sections in the colonies and dependencies considerably expedited socio-political development in the colonial East and invigorated the anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples and the struggle of the young working class. This undermined imperialism's political monopoly in the colonies, shook the foundations of its rule, isolated the colonialists and their allies and exposed the military, police and terroristic nature of colonial rule. The Comintern, its ideas and its political line were always the main motive force in the revolutions which battered the foundations of imperialism's political domination in the colonies. The Comintern won the profound respect of all progressive democratic forces of the world fighting against colonialism, and aroused intense hatred and fear among the imperialists, colonialists and their ideologists and politicians.

Of special significance were the Comintern's measures to organise the communist movement in the East and train the necessary cadres, and also its assistance to the Communist parties with comradely advice, recommendations and criticism.

The global scale of the Comintern's work, the vigorous activity of prominent Marxists-Leninists in its ranks, the creative and lively discussions that were typical of the Comintern as an organisation of the Leninist type and, finally, its irreconcilable fight against anti-Leninist deviations enabled this organisation—the headquarters of the world communist movement—to define and correctly solve a number of crucial theoretical, political and organisational prob-

lems of the communist, working-class, national liberation, peasant and anti-war movements.

It was the Seventh Congress of the Comintern which sat in 1935 that gave a brilliant example of how creative decisions of enormous mobilising power should be drawn up. But the Comintern's decisions were worked out not only at its congresses. An exceptionally important role in this respect was played by its Executive Committee (ECCI), Presidium and Secretariats, and, since we are examining the national liberation movement, by the Eastern Secretariat of the Executive Committee.

The Comintern was an organisation which considerably contributed to the development of the Marxist-Leninist teaching. Among other things it was a major scientific centre of the international communist movement. In the field of the anti-imperialist struggle against colonialism, for the freedom, and independence of the oppressed peoples the Comintern successfully worked on such vast and complicated problems as the theory, strategy and tactics of the national colonial revolutions and wars which took place in the post-October epoch of the rise and consolidation of the world's first socialist state and under the conditions of the general crisis of capitalism and its colonial system. Here are just a few of the problems that were scientifically formulated by the Comintern and were directly connected with the "eastern question": the specific features of the countries of the Afro-Asian region; the development of the proletariat of these countries; the significance of the agrarian and peasant question in the East; the alliances of the proletariat and its party with non-proletarian anti-imperialist forces; the correlation of class and national tasks confronting the Communist parties in oppressed countries; the policy of the Communist parties of the imperialist countries towards the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples; the tactics of a united national anti-imperialist front in conditions obtaining in a given country; the hegemony of the proletariat in the national colonial revolution; the development of national liberation revolutions into socialist revolutions; the ways and forms of the transition of the backward countries to socialism, including the problems of non-capitalist development.

Many of the scientific conclusions embodied in the Comintern's decisions and documents and adopted as guidelines for practical activity have retained their significance to this day. A few words about some of them. Let's begin with the conclusion that a national liberation revolution can develop successfully only if it also resolves anti-feudal issues of concern to the great mass of the peasants. Experience has fully verified this conclusion formulated on the basis of Lenin's propositions. National liberation revolutions acquired a radical character and then grew over into socialist revolutions precisely in countries where anti-feudal objectives had been resolved at the national liberation stage thus involving the peasantry in the revolutionary struggle. And today, too, the problem of drawing the peasantry into the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist movements is a matter of great importance for the Communists in the developing countries.

It should be noted that Lenin's idea that it was possible for the imperialist-oppressed countries to effect the transition to socialism and communism bypassing the capitalist stage was further elaborated by the Comintern. It arrived at the conclusion, which was confirmed by practice, that the transition to non-capitalist development could be carried out under the guidance of a political bloc embracing along with the proletariat the labouring peasantry and urban and rural petty-bourgeois strata. The important thing was that this conclusion rested on a very important idea formulated by Lenin, namely, that in principle the oppressed countries could bypass capitalism in their development. He mentioned this in his report to the Second Congress of the Comintern. Then, in the course of a thorough revision of Roy's theses, Lenin and the commission concerned introduced a proposition about the possibility of bypassing the capitalist stage of development into the document adopted at the Congress.

Now, a few words about the legitimacy and expedience of the currently widespread term "the non-capitalist path of development" (or "socialist orientation"). Let us recall how it came into being.

The Second Congress of the Comintern which met in 1920 examined the question whether the economically backward countries could arrive at socialism either bypassing or great-

ly shortening the capitalist stage of development. The "leftists" while agreeing that there was such a possibility, nevertheless, did not feel that it was the task of the Communists to support the national revolutionary forces and establish a united front with them. (A necessary condition was that proletarian movement should retain its independence.) They believed that the Communist parties had only one task: to stand at the head of struggle of the masses, help them to leap over the democratic stage of the revolution for national liberty and independence against the colonialists and hasten the transformation of the national liberation movements into a proletarian revolution, thus achieving national liberation and social emancipation at one and the same time. In a word they put forward an unrealistic, immature and therefore unattainable adventuristic plan as an alternative to capitalist development. This plan was conceived by M. N. Roy, whose stand on all basic issues is examined in detail in this book.

Lenin resolutely opposed this point of view and spelled out the conditions which could provide the economically backward countries with a real opportunity to cut short capitalist development at an early stage or even bypass it altogether. Among these conditions were, first, the growth of political awareness and the level of independent organisation and activity of the labouring and exploited masses, and, second, which is a factor of historic importance that appeared only after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the assistance of the victorious proletariat. Consolidating its authority in more and more countries, with socialism turning from a national into an international force, the proletariat could increasingly influence world politics. In this connection Lenin contended that the main task which confronted the Communists in the less developed countries was to establish close ties between the revolutionary masses of the Eastern countries with the international proletariat, and enter into a firm alliance with Soviet Russia.

Elaborating on the ideas of Marx and Engels, Lenin evolved a teaching about the possibility of the colonies and semi-colonies bypassing, shortening or terminating capitalist development. He explained that such a possibility emerged as a result of the appearance of a country of the

victorious proletariat and that the key internal condition of its realisation was the independent political activity of the labouring masses of the East which the Communists should support in every way. He did not believe that the Eastern countries could bypass, shorten or stop capitalist development only if the Communists would come to power in them. Lenin proved that such variants of development were possible as a result of the struggle of the mass organisations of the working people which should be established and function with the active participation of the Communists (their primary and essential task) and the assistance and co-operation of the international working class, and especially of the country where socialism has triumphed. He also proved that having established a political system which would be won by the working people under the guidance of broadly based ("non-party") revolutionary organisations, the backward countries could attain communism "through certain stages of development", and that the formation of "independent contingent of fighters and party organisations" was a condition for such development. In this way the economically backward countries could enter communism not "through capitalism", but bypassing or substantially curtailing the capitalist stage of development.

When Lenin referred to the possibility of bypassing the capitalist stage of development he did not mean any particular group of especially backward countries, but only those of them where pre-capitalist relations were predominant. He pondered the idea of mass popular ("non-party") organisations to be established "everywhere, in both the backward countries and the colonies" (not only in the borderlands of the former tsarist empire, but also in the colonies of the Western imperialist powers), and also in the "backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war"¹. Neither did Lenin rule out such a relatively developed Eastern country as India (it should be mentioned that many Eastern countries today are still lagging behind the level of development India had attained by 1920). What

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 243-44.

was common to all countries which Lenin mentioned was imperialist oppression and pre-eminence of pre-capitalist relations, (even though a "certain advance towards progress" was to be seen). Thus, when Lenin spoke about "bypassing" he used this term in a broad sense, which meant also "cutting short".

Lenin's point of view triumphed. The Second Congress of the Comintern rejected the leftist course aimed at accomplishing a direct proletarian revolution in countries with predominating pre-capitalist relations, which faced the historic task of deposing foreign rule and attaining national liberation and state sovereignty. At the same time the Congress determined that they could reach socialism "not through capitalist development", a formula proposed by the Committee which worked under Lenin's direct guidance. Subsequently this premise was comprehensively reflected in the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern.

Today the path of socialist orientation is followed by a number of newly-free countries, where state power is in the hands of the non-proletarian revolutionary forces connected with the urban and rural working masses vitally interested in radical social transformations benefitting the people, and not in the hands of the working class. Would it be correct to emphasise the socialist orientation of these countries and overlook the fact that so far their advance towards socialism is taking place not under the leadership of the working class? No, it would be wrong.

When we use the term "non-capitalist path of development"

we resolutely and fully in keeping with scientific socialism reject the point of view that the peoples of the economically backward countries can attain socialism only after boiling in the capitalist kettle;

we draw attention to the fact that the movement of countries towards socialism at the stage of general democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal transformations accompanied by the liquidation of large-scale capitalist property of the compradore bourgeoisie and, at times, even of the national bourgeoisie, may take place with reliance upon the working masses;

we assert that when a country decides to build socialism,

when it begins to move towards socialism "not through capitalist development" it already has relatively favourable objective and subjective, internal and external conditions for this movement;

we point out that although the revolutionary leadership of such a country is not of a Marxist-Leninist nature, it, nevertheless, has not only anti-imperialist, but also anti-capitalist potentialities whose successful realisation in the final analysis logically calls for a gradual adoption by this leadership of scientific socialism;

we emphasise that the creation of the material and technical basis for socialism and a corresponding social structure in the course of bypassing capitalism or considerably curtailing its development, would be a lengthy, complex and difficult process. The special difficulties are linked either to the absence or a great shortage of the material and social prerequisites for socialism which are created in the course of capitalist development itself, while the removal or bypassing of the latter is in fact the essence of the matter.

It follows that the term "non-capitalist path of development" points to important specific features of the movement of a once backward colonial country along the road of social progress. These features manifest the general laws of the transition to socialism not from the full-fledged capitalist economic system which has consolidated its domination, but from pre-bourgeois, initial or poorly developed capitalist relations under the new conditions of the international revolutionary process, when the powerful world socialist system has become consolidated and is exercising increasing influence, and the colonial system of imperialism is crumbling under the combined blows of the national liberation and socialist revolutions.

The term "non-capitalist path of development" is not far-fetched; it signifies a concrete social phenomenon of exceptional significance which has to be very thoroughly assessed in our day in order to be able to chart a correct policy for deepening the national liberation revolution and securing its transition to a higher stage. This term is equivalent to Lenin's term "without passing through the capitalist stage", which is a possible prospect and a possible path for

almost 1,500 million people in the world away from capitalism which has already become an outdated socio-economic formation.

However hard the Peking dogmatists strive to discredit the term "non-capitalist path of development" or "socialist orientation" and the Marxist-Leninist scientific concept it expresses, this path exists and will continue to win more and more adherents because it reflects an objectively historic need of immense significance for the backward peoples to move forward towards socialism and start liquidating their age-old technical, economic, social and cultural backwardness without reliance on the "services" of capitalism.

Life has confirmed Lenin's forecast: countries with the most diverse levels of capitalist development took the path of socialist orientation, the non-capitalist development; common to them all was that they had liberated themselves and that the capitalist structure was not predominant in them. So long as the latter circumstance remains unchanged the path of socialist development ("bypassing capitalism") for the economically backward countries is by no means closed. But a possibility is not a reality, and the fact that Lenin determined such a possibility for the economically backward countries on a global scale did not mean that all of them would necessarily follow this path. In the first place, some of the backward countries could with time become capitalist; in the second place, a socialist revolution led by a Communist party could win in some of them (as was the case in China in the period between 1949 and 1958, in Korea and Vietnam) and thus eliminate the need for them to take to the path of non-capitalist development; and finally, it could happen that the revolutionary forces would simply find themselves incapable of exploiting such a possibility. The fact that the newly-free countries which are following the non-capitalist path are in the minority does not mean that the possibility of taking this path is diminishing. The tendency among the newly-free countries to take the non-capitalist path is increasing judging by the fact that the number of socialist-oriented countries is growing all the time.

Fully in keeping with Marxism-Leninism, the Communists believe that if objective and subjective conditions for the working class to assume the leadership have not yet taken

shape in a given country but if, at the same time, the anti-capitalist programme for social progress is being implemented to a degree by the revolutionary national-democratic leadership, this is a major achievement of the national liberation revolution and scientific socialism, and tends to deepen the world revolutionary process directed against imperialism and capitalism. No one can deny the fact that it was the Marxists, Communists and proponents of scientific socialism who as early as in the latter half of the 19th century began to advance and theoretically substantiate the idea that nations which had not passed the capitalist stage could avail themselves of the opportunity to avoid it with the help of the victorious proletariat of the economically advanced countries, could bypass capitalism in their development. Nor can anyone deny the fact that the Communists were the first to exploit this chance of bypassing capitalism on the great expanses of the Soviet Union in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the northern regions of European and Asian Russia and the Far East, areas with a complex historical background, specific social structures and a numerous population with extremely diverse conditions of life. The Communists were the first to lead dozens of nationalities of the Soviet Union to socialist prosperity, bypassing the stage of capitalist development. In close friendship with the Soviet Communists the same gigantic work was performed by the Mongolian revolutionaries in their country, starting out from the positions of revolutionary national democracy and then more and more adopting the ideas of scientific socialism.

The Communists subject negative aspects in the activity of the revolutionary democratic leaderships in the socialist-oriented countries to constructive criticism and at the same time fully support their progressive measures and their struggle against the common enemies—imperialism and internal reaction. By sincerely striving to co-operate with the revolutionary democrats, the Communists help the latter to implement the revolutionary democratic anti-capitalist programme more consistently and with a greater effect. The Communists do not in the least intend to take advantage of one or another miscalculation, setback, or a temporary defeat of a progressive regime in order to discredit it. They do all they can to help develop the democratic and

socialist potentialities of the progressive regimes and consistently represent the class interests of the developing proletariat and all the working people.

Only by acting in this way the Marxists-Leninists and with them the national revolutionary democrats are able to accelerate the historically irreversible process of bringing scientific socialism and, consequently, the working class to leading positions in the revolution in their country. The leading position of the working class in the national liberation revolution is a result of the hard work of its vanguard within the framework of the revolutionary anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist front, but it is not at all an essential precondition for its formation on a national scale.

Diehard Peking-type dogmatists and the opponents of Communists are trying to break up the natural political alliance which, not without difficulties arising both from the vestiges of the past and also differences in ideology, has been gradually building up for many years now between the Marxists-Leninists and the revolutionary democrats. In pursuance of their goal anti-Marxists of all hues endeavour to prove that the Communists are concerned solely with fighting for power under all circumstances and at all stages of the revolution and that, therefore, it is neither possible to co-operate and be friends with them nor trust them. But this is calumny about the Communists and its spread is stimulated by the theoretical and practical activity of the Peking leadership. The anti-Marxists are also striving to prove that the Communists have allegedly always relegated to second place the question of the formation and the activity of the mass organisations concerned with the immediate economic and political interests of the working people.

The task of building and developing the communist movement in the East was in focus of attention of the Comintern during its work in the colonies and semi-colonies. But this does not mean that the Comintern from the very outset regarded the formation of Communist parties as its primary task in the East without regard for the degree of the maturity of the proletariat in a given country, the level of training of the cadres and other objective and subjective factors. Lenin warned against artificial acceleration of the formation of Communist parties which could have resulted

in the simple repainting of non-communist liberation trends into the colour of communism. It is important to note that *The Supplementary Theses of the Second Congress of the Comintern on the National and Colonial Questions* (Roy's radically re-edited theses which were adopted by the Congress) designated the formation of mass non-party organisations as the main and essential task of the Communists in the East. This conclusion was fully consistent with the idea Lenin put forward in his report at the Second Congress: that the Communists ought to contribute in every way to the creation of organisations of the exploited, organisations of peasants, organisations of working people. In this respect the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, the CPSU Central Committee, rendered a very great service in 1970 by proving that question taken up in the *Supplementary Theses* was precisely that of "non-party organisations". By working in these organisations the communists were to promote the formation of Communist parties and the extension of their influence in the masses.¹

* * *

This book has been written by scientists working in various research institutions of Moscow who were united into a team of authors by the Institute of International Labour Movement of the USSR Academy of Sciences for the purpose of examining a major and topical scientific and political

¹ See: *V. I. Lenin and the Communist International*, Moscow, 1970, p. 204 (in Russian). There was an error in the text of the document published in some of the works which came out prior to 1970. As a result the impression was created that already in 1920 Lenin and the Comintern regarded that the most important task facing the communists in the East was that of creating Communist parties which would lead the peasants and workers to revolution and the "establishment of Soviet republics". But the "establishment of Soviet republics" under the leadership of Communist parties is the same thing as the coming of the Communists to power. Lenin and the Comintern, as can be imagined, did not and could not set the Communists such a task. The main and the most urgent task in the East in 1920 was the formation of mass organisations of working people, a task that was not an alternative but a necessary supplement to that of setting up Communist parties (in those parts of the East where there were the necessary conditions for this).

problem, the role played by the Comintern in the development of the national liberation movement in the East.

The need to conduct a thorough study of the problem is great indeed. It was taken up time and again by many bourgeois, social-democratic, revisionist and left sectarian historians who referred to the most diverse and, at times, very dubious and simply slanderous sources. They presented a perverted picture of the history of the Comintern and its Eastern policy in order to prove the "failure" of the organisation's strategy and tactics in the national liberation movement.

In contrast to hostile attacks on the history of the Comintern, the present work offers a scientifically objective interpretation of certain aspects in the activities of the world communist centre with regard to the revolutionary solution of the national and colonial questions.

The first part of the book traces the prehistory and the history of the Comintern's strategy and tactics in the national liberation movement up to the last years of its activity. It describes the role played by the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia and by the CPSU in promoting the development of the communist movement in the East. Quite naturally the greatest attention is paid to those basic conclusions drawn from the strategy and tactics of the Comintern in the East which have passed the test of time, retained their significance and have been assimilated by the world communist movement (the problem of the hegemony of the proletariat in a backward peasant country, united anti-imperialist front tactics, correlation of the national and international aspects of the revolution, etc.).

The second part includes articles on the Comintern's policy in some of the Eastern countries where the communist and the national liberation movements have acquired the greatest dimensions and whose study is particularly important today.

Considerable space is devoted to China, both owing to the international significance of the Chinese revolution and the role played by the Comintern in the formation of the Communist Party of China and its victory. A detailed examination of the problems of the Chinese revolution is also necessary due to the perfidy of the Peking leaders who are

seeking to distort, defame and discredit the Comintern's strategy and tactics in the Chinese revolution.

In view of the need to ascertain the historical roots of Maoism, the articles on China contain a more detailed examination of individual stages and the more instructive episodes of the internal struggle in the CPC and the struggle of the Comintern and the proletarian internationalist wing in the CPC against petty-bourgeois nationalistic, right-wing opportunistic and leftist deviations. The experience of struggle for the purity of Marxism-Leninism in the CPC shows that the most tenacious anti-Leninist deviations were various manifestations of "left" opportunism (Chen Tu-hsiuism, Li Li-sanism and particularly Maoism) although right-wing opportunism is inherent in all of them, too.

An interesting article deals with the Comintern's attitude to the problem of a united anti-imperialist front in India. It discusses the role played by the Indian bourgeoisie, the essence of Gandhism and the stand of the Comintern towards them, which, as is known, was not always well-grounded. An important place in the book is given to subjects connected with the great history of the communist movement in Vietnam, which under communist leadership defeated the imperialist aggressor, achieved the unification of the country and is now building socialism.

The book also examines the Comintern's analysis of the socio-economic structure of the colonial society. It is easy to see that as a political party organisation the Comintern was also a major research centre. It formulated its policy in the liberation movement on the basis of a profound study of the complicated socio-economic processes occurring in the East.

Finally, the authors examine and criticise the most important works of bourgeois and reformist historians of the Comintern.

This book does not nor can claim to be an exhaustive study of the history of the Comintern's anti-imperialist policy in the East. At best it is a new step in the study of its policy with regard to the national liberation struggle of the peoples of some of the main colonies, semi-colonies and dependencies.

Finally, it should be noted that whatever is said or

written by the diehard class enemies fighting the international working-class movement for decades, and no matter how much slander is heaped upon the Comintern by apostates from the communist movement, the Communist International will go down in history as one of the greatest achievements of Marxism-Leninism, an embodiment of internationalism and fraternity of the proletarians of all countries and oppressed peoples.

R. A. ULYANOVSKY

THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST COLONIALISM PRIOR TO THE FORMATION OF THE COMINTERN

F. B. BELELYUBSKY

The Comintern's attitude towards the national liberation movement in the colonies and dependencies was formed under the influence of various factors. In the first place, the Great October Socialist Revolution had wrought radical changes in the alignment of class forces on the international arena. The Comintern leadership drew on the experience of the revolutionary movement, the solution of the national question and socialist construction in Soviet Russia (particularly in the formerly backward regions inhabited by national minorities), studied the concrete conditions in different countries and so forth. In its activity among the peoples of the East the Comintern also took account of the anti-colonial traditions of various contingents of the international working-class movement.

Pre-proletarian anti-colonialism. The first actions in Europe against colonial plunder (the 17th century to first half of the 19th century) were part of the bourgeois-democratic movement against feudalism. For all the variety of slogans and arguments, two tendencies can be clearly distinguished in pre-proletarian anti-colonialism: protection of the interests of the emerging industrial bourgeoisie which aspired to "normal" capitalist exploitation of the colonies and protested against the policy of the commercial monopolies and other (as a rule, sanguinary) non-economic methods of early colonialism (both in the periods of maritime feudal expansion and in the periods of commercial monopolies), and the general democratic, humanistic rejection of tyranny, and respect and interest for the cultures of other peoples typical of most ideologists of European Enlightenment. Although

anti-colonial ideas were an element of sometimes incompatible political concepts, anti-colonialism, just as humanism, was part of the democratic culture as a whole, of the social thought and psychology of the European society.¹

The working-class movement was called upon to surmount the contradictory nature and the class and historical insufficiency of non-proletarian anti-colonialism. As they rid themselves of the illusions of the humanists and formulated their own scientific arguments, the revolutionary socialists assimilated the sincerity and moral purity from their finest precursors and their knowledge of Asian and African problems.² They drew upon the experience of joint actions of peoples of different races for democracy (the American War of Independence, and republican France's assistance to the peoples of the Haiti). There was a parallel process, which is continuing to this day, of mutual influence and enrichment and co-operation of the class proletarian and broad anti-imperialist and anti-colonial tendencies in the public activity of the developed capitalist countries and the developing countries. In the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries proletarian political writers widely quoted the slogans of non-proletarian anti-colonialism. R. Palme Dutt pointed to the continuity of these traditions³. Marxism undoubtedly influenced leading representatives of European culture, and today, too, it attracts the widest circles of the progressive democratic intelligentsia. This helps the struggle against colonialism and neocolonialism for the full freedom of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

¹ See: *Centuries of Unequal Struggle*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 141-45 (in Russian).

² In spite of his negative attitude to Edmund Burke who was the prosecutor of Warren Hastings, the well-known colonialist, Marx refers to the materials of the trial in Chapter XXIV of the First Volume of *Capital* devoted to primary accumulation. In it Marx also quotes from William Howitt's anti-colonialist pamphlet. Lenin spoke highly of the works by the pacifists and anti-colonialists John Hobson and Edmund Morel. W. S. Blunt collected vast material exposing the colonialists which was used by the prominent Marxist Th. Rothstein.

³ Palme Dutt, "Theodor Rothstein—Marxist, Fighter Against Imperialism", *Imperialism and the Struggle of the Working Class*, Moscow, 1960, p. 207 (in Russian).

The first steps of the working-class movement and the colonial issue. The banner of the anti-colonial struggle began to pass into the hands of the organised working-class movement from the moment it appeared on the political scene.

In Great Britain, the proletarian organisations sometimes formed a compact with the revolutionary democratic European émigré circles and petty-bourgeois opposition in order to carry out one or another anti-colonial action. But the progressive elements of the British working-class movement strove to establish an independent proletarian organisation which would pursue its own policy. The working class had yet to find its bearings in the maze of liberal-democratic rhetoric, therefore the participation of the proletariat in the general democratic measures at the time was only sporadic.

The Chartist¹ organisations and their press paid a great deal of attention to the colonial issue. In the 1840s and 1850s the Chartists organised a series of protest meetings against colonial outrages in Africa, Iran, India, China and other countries.² Doing justice to the journalistic skill, sincerity and energy of the Chartist critics of colonialism, it should be noted, however, that particularly in the initial stage their scientific analysis of British capitalism's external economic expansion was inadequate. But gradually Chartist political writings became more mature; this was the direct result of Marx's and Engels's participation in the British working-class movement.³ The workers' press

¹ Chartists—members of the Chartist movement of the British workers in the 1830s and 1840s for the enforcement of the People's Charter, a draft law setting forth the workers' demands. The Chartists were the first to bring the proletarian movement to the political scene. Lenin wrote that their movement "in many respects was something preparatory to Marxism". V. I. Lenin "On Compromises" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 492).

² N. A. Yerofeyev, "Chartism and Great Britain's Colonial Policy", *New and Latest History*, 1957, No. 1; N. A. Yerofeyev, "The British People and the Colonies", in his: *British Colonialism in the Mid-20th Century*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 214-240 (both publications in Russian); James Bryne, "British Opinion and the Indian Revolt" in: *Rebellion 1857. A Symposium*, 1957.

³ L. Golman, "E. Jones' Views on the Colonial Question", in: *Chartism* Moscow, 1961, pp. 385-88 (in Russian).

started publishing not only facts about colonial outrages but also analyses of the situation in Asian countries. Chartist publicists made several correct political forecasts, displaying profound understanding of the events that were taking place at the time. Ernest Jones, for instance, correctly predicted the rebellion in India and the possibility of armed intervention in China. He rendered an important service by exposing the connection between the reactionary internal and the aggressive foreign policy of the British Government, which, he said, would endeavour to start small wars overseas in order to prevent a major victory of freedom at home. That was why it organised a bloodbath in Iran and carnage in China, and preferred to talk about Canton instead of franchise and workers' rights.¹

Slowly but surely the working-class movement divorced itself from non-proletarian anti-colonialism. In 1854 the Chartist Charles Murray criticised Richard Cobden² who believed that a people's capacity to attain independence was contingent on the volume of manufactured goods which it could import to Britain.³ The great British utopian socialist Robert Owen who was greatly impressed by the Indian rebellion came forward in 1858 with a plan for gradually granting India independence which envisaged the establishment of European-type social institutions in that country during the transitional period. He also proposed that the proclamation of independence should be accompanied by a conclusion of a political and economic treaty between Britain and India, and that equal rights be granted to the peoples of both countries.⁴ Robert Owen did not participate in the Chartist movement, but it is known that many of his disciples did take an active part in it. On the whole, however, it can be said that the British working-class movement did not state its attitude to this plan. In 1866 the trade

¹ See: V. Klimenko, "The British Society and the Second Opium War", *Questions of History*, 1962, No. 4, p. 215 (in Russian).

² Richard Cobden (1804-1865)—British statesman, ideologist of the industrial bourgeoisie and leading advocate of Free Trade.

³ G. Fischer, *Le parti travailliste et la décolonisation de l'Inde*, Paris, 1966, p. 18.

⁴ G. Fischer, *Op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

unionist E. H. Pember told a meeting that India ought to be left to the Indians. But the more influential Edward Spencer Beesly who spoke next was far more cautious: "Our duty is to withdraw from India... But to withdraw prematurely would be a crime no less fearsome than conquest."¹

The workers had to surmount guild and sectarian sentiments in their own ranks. And when one of the Chartist leaders Feargus O'Connor reproached *The Northern Star* newspaper for displaying too much interest in foreign affairs, George Julian Harney repeated his favourite thought: "A blow struck at the liberties of one people is intended to strike down the liberties of all."²

It was in the British working-class movement that blacks and coloured people for the first time began to fight side by side with the white working people not only for democratic freedoms in general, but also for the rights of the working people themselves.³ However, as a result of the general infection of the working class with opportunism, this important tradition of the British working-class movement did not develop to any considerable extent either in Britain or the United States where the long years of indifference to the racial problem was a major fault of the movement.

In the first half and the middle of the 19th century in France criticism of colonial conquests became the basic plat-

¹ G. Fischer, *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

² *The Northern Star*, March 10, 1849. Marx and Engels expressed the same thought at an international meeting in London in November 1847: "The victory of the English proletarians over the English bourgeoisie, is, therefore, decisive for the victory of all the oppressed over their oppressors. Hence Poland must be liberated not in Poland but in England. So you Chartists must not simply express pious wishes for the liberation of nations," Marx said. Engels, who continued his thought, added: "A nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations." (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "On Poland", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 389). The fact that this idea became widespread in the Chartist movement attests to the direct connection between the maturity of late Chartism and the penetration of the ideas of scientific socialism into the British working-class movement.

³ P. Kemp-Ashraf, *Africans in the Democratic Movement of Great Britain in the Beginning of the 19th Century*, Moscow, 1960 (in Russian).

form of republican opposition. The opponents of the monarchy both among the workers and elsewhere were unanimous in their condemnation of the colonial ventures, although legal criticism was very seriously handicapped.¹ In the French working-class movement a certain degree of influence was enjoyed by groups which underestimated the significance of the national and colonial issue and regarded it with indifference. Pierre Proudhon wrote that "each race, each nationality is master of its territory",² but at the same time offered no support to the struggle of the oppressed peoples and even approved colonial policy of it was motivated by aims of "enlightenment". Subsequently the struggle against the Proudhonists over the national question was conducted in the First International.

In the early half of the 19th century in other European countries, too, the working-class movement was not ripe enough to formulate independent positions on the colonial question.

The views of Marx and Engels on the national and colonial question. Bourgeois authors who are influenced by the right-wing social-democratic views have a tendency to portray Marx's and Engels' position in this issue as both unclear and undeveloped.³ Actually, however, the works of the founders of Marxism contain methodological principles of solving the national-colonial question and the experience of political decisions which they adopted in concrete situations. They formulated the basic principles of a comprehensive examination of the colonial problem: the specific features of the Eastern society; the link between colonial expansion and the primary accumulation of capital; the contradictory and dual socio-historical role of foreign capitalist domination in Asian, African and Latin American countries; the forms and methods of colonial exploitation; the interconnection between the national liberation movement in the colonies and the proletarian class struggle; the attitude of the working-class movement towards the national movements when it comes to regard the national problem as a national-

¹ Charles Fournian, "Contemporary French Press", in *Rebellion 1857. A Symposium*, New Delhi, 1957, pp. 318-49.

² P.-J. Proudhon, *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 3, Paris, 1924, p. 198.

³ R. Schlesinger, *Marx. His Time and Ours*, London, 1950.

colonial one; the path of development of the economically backward countries following the victory of socialism in industrialised countries.¹

The attitude of the founders of Marxism towards the national question began to form back in the 1840s. In 1845 Engels said: "Only the proletarians can destroy nationality, only the awakening proletariat can bring about fraternisation between the different nations."²

In his polemic with Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin wrote: "It was Marx's custom to 'sound out' his socialist acquaintances, as he expressed it, to test their intelligence and the strength of their convictions. . . . Marx questions a socialist belonging to an oppressor nation about his attitude to the oppressed nation and at once reveals a defect *common* to the socialists of the dominant nations: . . . failure to understand their socialist duties towards the downtrodden nations."³

A logical conclusion drawn from Marx's idea about the "mutual dependency of mankind"⁴ under capitalism was the thesis on the "mutual dependence" of the struggle of the proletariat and the peoples that were still being enslaved at the time. The ascertainment of such a connection in the mid-19th century, when the world market was only in the process of formation, was a brilliant discovery of the classics of Marxism: "It may seem a very strange, and a very paradoxical assertion that the next uprising of the people of Europe, and their next movement for republican freedom and economy of government, may depend more probably on what is now passing in the Celestial Empire—the very opposite of Europe—than on any other political cause that

¹ See: K. L. Seleznev, "K. Marx and F. Engels on the National and Colonial Question", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1970, No. 5 (in Russian); K. L. Seleznev, "Misinterpretation of the Programme and Tactics of K. Marx and F. Engels on the National and Colonial Questions by Bourgeois Writers on Marxism", *Op. cit.*, 1973, No. 6; G. F. Kim and F. I. Shabshina, *Proletarian Internationalism and the Revolution in the Countries of the East*, Moscow, 1967 (in Russian).

² F. Engels, "The Festival of Nations in London", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 6.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 435.

⁴ K. Marx, "The Future Results of British Rule in India", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 499.

now exists...."¹ In a letter to Engels of January 1858 Marx characterised the rebellion in India as an objective factor contributing to the struggle of the proletariat by "drawing away people and money".²

The theory of the founders of Marxism about the historical progressiveness of capitalist production and the formation of world market was prodigiously falsified by the revisionists, as will be shown further on in the book.

"The difficult question for us is this: on the Continent the revolution is imminent and will moreover immediately assume a socialist character. Is it not bound to be crushed in this little corner, considering that in a far greater territory the movement of bourgeois society is still in the ascendant?", Marx wrote to Engels in 1858.³ The founders of Marxism resolved this "difficult question" by recognising the possibility of the peoples lagging behind in socio-economic development moving towards socialist social forms by-passing the capitalist stage of production: "This example will show the backward countries how this is done, how to make the production forces of modern industry, which have been turned into public property, serve the whole of society in general, only then these backward countries will be able to embark on this shortened road of development."⁴

The Marxist teaching concerning a "shortened" or "non-capitalist" path of development is amply illuminated in Soviet literature.⁵ And in this article it would be expedient to recall only Lenin's warning against seeking a standard of schematised solution of this problem. "Engels does not at all suppose that the 'economic' alone will directly remove all difficulties. An economic revolution will be a stimulus to all peoples to strive for socialism, but at the same time re-

¹ Karl Marx, "Revolution in China and in Europe", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, p. 98.

² Marx/Engels, "Marx an Engels in Manchester, [London, um den 16.] Jan. 1858", *Werke*, Vol. 29, p. 259.

³ "Marx to Engels in Manchester, London, October 8, 1858", K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, p. 104.

⁴ Marx/Engels, "Nachwort (1894) zu 'Soziales aus Rußland'", *Werke*, Vol. 22, p. 428.

⁵ R. Ulyanovsky, *Socialism and the Newly Independent Nations*, Moscow, 1972; R. Ulyanovsky, *The National Liberation Struggle*, Moscow, 1976.

volutions—against the socialist state—and wars are possible. Politics will inevitably adapt themselves to the economy, but not immediately or smoothly, not simply, not directly. Engels mentions as 'certain' only one, absolutely internationalist, principle, and this he applies to all 'foreign nations', i. e., not to colonial nations only: to force blessings upon them would mean to undermine the victory of the proletariat."¹

Finally, one of the most important aspects of the Marxist approach to the national question is the teaching about the two sides of nationalism. As distinct from Bakunin, who fetishised every national movement, Marx and Engels in their theoretical and practical activity raised the question about the concrete historical content of each manifestation of the national struggle, distinguishing progressive nationalism from reactionary nationalism. In a letter to Engels of June 20, 1866, Marx informed him of his fight against the efforts to put an end to the national question as an "anti-quoted prejudice".² On his part, Engels, in a letter to E. Bernstein of August 9, 1882, noted that while supporting in principle the demands of the oppressed peoples it would be wrong to become reconciled with their illusions and prejudices: "We can very well come out in support of the oppressed *fellahin* without sharing their current illusions (for a peasant people has to be deceived for ages before it learns from its own experience), and can oppose the violence of the English without having the least need to make common cause with their present military adversaries."³

The Attitude of the First International and the Paris Commune to the national and colonial problem. Very substantial changes took place in the international working-class movement after the formation of the First International. The General Rules and Administrative Regulations of the International Workingmen's Association, as the First International was called, proclaimed that "All societies and individuals adhering to it will acknowledge truth, justice

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 352-53.

² "Marx to Engels in Manchester, London, June 20, 1866", K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 167.

³ Marx/Engels, "Engels an Eduard Bernstein in Zürich, London, 9. Aug. 1882", *Werke*, Vol. 35, p. 348.

and morality as the basis of their conduct towards each other and towards all men without regard to colour, creed or nationality".¹ Addressing the founding assembly of the International trade-union leader Beesly condemned Britain's hypocritical and dishonest policy in China, India and Japan.² The International Workingmen's Association which from the very outset proclaimed the idea of international fraternity of working people had a tremendous influence on the development of the ideology of proletarian internationalism. The proletariat's struggle against colonialism began to acquire a scientific basis and the vanguard of the international working-class movement began to evolve from a determined criticism of colonialism to a serious struggle against it and turn into the one and only true ally of the oppressed nations. Although the activists and organisations of the International Workingmen's Association were engrossed in the strike movement and mass political campaigns, they found the time to work on the national and colonial problem, too.³

In an attempt to pool the efforts of relatively small groups and organisations which had adopted the ideas of scientific communism, the founders of the First International pointed out in the Rules that "...the emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem embracing all countries in which modern society exists". There was a proposal not to mention "modern society", but it was withdrawn following statements by Engels and Leo Franckel.⁴

¹ *The General Council of the First International, 1870-1871. Minutes*, Moscow, 1967, p. 452. In a letter to Engels of November 4, 1864, Marx expressed his dissatisfaction with the declaratory nature of this point of the rules (K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, p. 138.)

² See: Henry Collins and Chimen Abramsky, *Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement, Years of the First International*, London, 1965, p. 35.

³ See: I. Yefremov, "The First International and Problems of the National Liberation Struggle", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1964, No. 6, p. 47; L. Golman, "The First International and the National Liberation Movement", *Questions of History of the CPSU*, 1964, No. 7 (in Russian).

⁴ *The General Council of the First International 1870-1871. Minutes*, p. 452.

The practical activity of the International shows that its members accepted this point not formally, not as disregard for countries which had no "modern society", but as an indication of the organisation's main goal. Thus, at a meeting of the General Council on August 15, 1871, its Secretary John Hales read a letter from Calcutta requesting authorisation to set up a section of the International in India. The General Council instructed the Secretary to dispatch a positive reply and "urge the necessity of enrolling natives in the Association".¹ The latter point made it clear that the authors of this lost letter were Englishmen residing in India.

At the time, the Irish question was politically the most acute national issue for Britain. "The policy of Marx and Engels on the Irish question," Lenin wrote, "serves as a splendid example of the attitude the proletariat of the oppressor nations should adopt towards national movements, an example which has lost none of its immense practical importance."² In his "Confidential Communication" to the members of the International made at the time when the fate of the organisation was being decided in a polemic with the Bakuninists who accused its General Council for paying too much attention to Ireland, Marx once again emphasised: "Any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains."³

The proponents of scientific socialism also waged a difficult struggle against the Proudhonist disregard for the national question. In an article in *Le Courrier International* an anonymous Proudhonist "criticised the London Conference resolution on the Polish question (1865) and argued that the International Association should concern itself with questions of 'industrial associations' and 'workers' credit' and not with political issues".⁴ At the Geneva Congress in 1866 the majority of the participants defeated the protest of Proudhonist E. Fribourg against the adoption of a reso-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 442.

³ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. II, Moscow, 1973, p. 176.

⁴ *The General Council of the First International 1864-1866*, Moscow, p. 403.

lution on the "confused question of nationalities" (concerning the Polish question).

It was thanks to the activity of the First International that the working-class movement on the European continent began to display greater interest in the colonial issue. Breaking away from Proudhon's influence, the Paris Federation of the International published in April 1870 a statement which read in part: "The Empire, not content with oppressing you with taxes, robs you of your sons, your sole support, in order ... to scatter their abandoned corpses on the rugged lands of Syria, Cochin China and Mexico."¹ The Belgian newspaper *L'Internationale* reprinted a proclamation issued by a Chinese secret society Tinté huy², and also the following appeal: "We make it incumbent on those of our friends who manage to establish contact with India or China not to overlook the slightest possibility to organise this happy rapprochement."³ In the USA Marxists constituted a part of the working-class movement that was most amenable to the idea of fighting against racial inequality. The American Section of the First International co-operated with Black organisations, but its members were not fully aware of the significance of the Black question in the country.⁴

The ideas of international solidarity with the colonial peoples were not deeply rooted in the French working-class movement either when the Paris Commune was established. The Commune's leadership did not concretely express its attitude to the colonies, and articles voicing concern for the future of the French colonies in connection with the uprising of the Arabs in Algeria appeared in the Commune's press.⁵ The supporters of the Commune in Algeria ignored the liberation movement of the indigenous population. It should be mentioned, however, that the volunteers, who joined the ar-

¹ *The Paris Commune, 1871*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1961, pp. 90-91 (in Russian).

² Tinté huy (Association of Heaven and Earth) was a secret patriotic organisation of the lower social strata in China which appeared in the 17th century with the view to fighting against the Ching dynasty that was founded by the Manchu conquerors.

³ *L'Internationale*, January 16, 1870.

⁴ See: William Z. Foster, *The Negro People in American History*, New York, 1954, pp. 353-54.

⁵ *The Paris Commune*, Vol. II, p. 72 (in Russian).

my during the war resolutely refused to take part in crushing the Arab rebellion. But this stand was still far removed from an alliance against the common enemy. In 1871 the Paris Commune practically assisted the insurgent Arabs by drawing part of the forces of the bourgeoisie away from them.

When characterising the First International's contribution to the development of the ideas of proletarian internationalism it should be noted that in terms of its international significance the national and colonial issue was not fully studied at the time when the world system of capitalist economy was still in the process of formation. This issue was not discussed separately at the Congresses of the First International; it was recognised as an important component of the struggle of the international working class against the capitalist home countries only at the next stage of this movement. Still it was the First International that laid the foundations for its correct solution both in theory and in practice.

The stand of the working-class movement in Western Europe and the USA on the colonial question (end of the 19th-beginning of the 20th century). In this period the incessant wars of conquest in all parts of the world drew the proletariat's attention to the colonial question. "As a result of the extensive colonial policy," Lenin wrote, "the European proletariat partly finds himself in a position when it is *not* his labour, but the labour of the practically enslaved natives in the colonies, that maintains the whole of society.... In certain countries this provides the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat with colonial chauvinism."¹

At first these new tendencies had a particularly strong impact on the policy of the British trade unions. Yet the foremost representatives of the British working class continued to fight against colonialism. The traditions of internationalism were preserved and continued, in the first place, by British socialists. In 1885 the Socialist League (Eleanor Marx, William Morris and others) spoke out in defence of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 77.

the peoples of the Sudan and called upon the workers to protest against what they described as immoral and dishonest banditry.¹

A serious theoretical offensive against the ideas of proletarian internationalism was initiated by the Fabian Society² in a manifesto entitled *Fabianism and the Empire* edited by George Bernard Shaw. Its authors attempted to substantiate the need to preserve the British Empire by saying that this was in the interests of "international civilisation". The manifesto said: "The notion that a nation has a right to do what it pleases with its own territory, without reference to the interests of the rest of the world is no more tenable from the International Socialist point of view—that is, from the point of view of the twentieth century—than the notion that a landlord has a right to do what he likes with his estate without reference to the interests of his neighbours."³ The Fabians proceeded from national nihilism based on the interests of an "international civilisation" as opposed to "obsolete" national feelings. J. R. MacDonald's attempt to criticise the Fabians by referring to the proletariat's duty to show concern for the backward peoples became in his interpretation no more than a variant of the opportunistic criticism of the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination advanced by the London Congress of the Second International in 1896.

Under these circumstances a very important role was played by a book written by the British Marxist Th. Rothstein and published in 1910.⁴ Dissociating himself from the sentimental notions of the national liberation movement that were typical of the non-proletarian anti-colonial publicists, Rothstein disclosed in detail the combination of financial, economic, diplomatic and military penetration into Egypt

¹ See: A. Rothstein, "British Reformism and the Colonial Question", *Soviet Eastern Studies*, 1957, No. 6, p. 11 (in Russian).

² Fabian Society was an organisation which propagated the idea of slow and gradual transformation of capitalist society into a socialist society. The organisers named their society after the Roman general Fabius Cunctator who employed delaying tactics in the war against Hannibal.

³ Edward R. Pease, *The History of the Fabian Society*, London, 1925, pp. 135, 136.

⁴ Th. Rothstein, *Egypt's Ruin*, London, 1910.

and the tragic consequences for its population of such results of progress as the Suez Canal, the monocultural nature of Egyptian farming, and the fraudulent mechanism of onerous loans. He was the first in Marxist literature to raise the question about the army's role in the national liberation struggle and the possibility of the small nations taking advantage of the foreign political controversies of the major powers to protect their independence. Several months after the publication of this book Rothstein put out a brochure in German outlining the main points made in his book in order to unmask the apologetic feelings of the German social chauvinists for colonialism. Rothstein supplemented the 1924 Russian edition of the book with a conclusion about the need for an alliance between the national and the proletarian movements. The book was translated into Arabic and published in Egypt.

Although the proportion of the revisionists in the leadership of the working-class movement increased and became predominant, the anti-colonialist ideas at the beginning of the 20th century did not remain the monopoly of individuals. These tendencies in the movement found their expression in the statements of annual conferences of the Independent Labour and the Labour parties in support of the demands of the Indian National Congress (1905, 1908, 1910, 1911) and against the intervention in Iran (1907).¹ But these parties confined themselves to passing resolutions, with hardly any mass action to back them up. At the same time it is necessary to take into account such indirect forms of the anti-colonial struggle as the mass actions of workers against universal military service, military credits and the arms race.

The French working-class movement lacked such stable anti-colonialist traditions like those among the British workers. Many utopian socialists (Saint-Simonians, Fourierists, Proudhonists) believed that emigration and colonisation helped the workers to escape capitalist exploitation. One of the first anti-colonial movements was the campaign against colonial ventures in Tunisia, Egypt and Timbuktu (Western Africa). It was organised in the 1880s by a group of Egalité

¹ G. Fischer, *Op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

socialists headed by Jules Guesde, who subsequently became the leader of the French socialists.¹

In France, as in Britain, the transition to imperialism was accompanied by a certain proliferation of colonialist feelings among some of the leaders of the workers' and democratic movement. Interesting in this respect is the incomplete evolution of Jean Jaures² who covered a road which took him from a moderate bourgeois radical, a supporter of the colonialist Jules Ferry, to a champion of the right of the peoples to fight for their freedom, and the unconditional obligation of the proletariat to protect these peoples. He totally rejected the idea about peoples needing the patronage of the powers, but he never did come to the conclusion of the workers and the enslaved peoples having common vital interests and went no further than to dream about the future fraternity of peoples whatever their race.

Paul Louis, another prominent socialist publicist, was concerned with colonial issues and interested above all in imperialism's military and diplomatic activity. His concept of imperialism was in effect similar to Karl Kautsky's. He asserted that imperialism "emerges everywhere as capitalism's supreme effort to preserve its wealth, political domination, social authority. This involves territorial conquest, forcible or peaceful extension of possessions, closure of markets, creation of a closed empire".³

The Socialist Party of France examined the colonial issue only once. This was at a Congress in Nancy in August 1907 at which two reports were presented, one by G. Rouanet who spoke about the life of the natives, and the other by Paul Louis who looked into the causes of colonialism. There was no debate on the reports and they were not even passed on to the International Socialist Bureau.⁴ All this showed the utter disregard of the party's reformist leadership

¹ *La deuxième Internationale et l'Orient*, Paris, 1967, p. 18.

² See: A. Manfred, "Jean Jaures. The Indomitable Enemy of Reaction and War", and M. Roberio, "Jean Jaures, the People's Tribune", in: *J. Jaures Against War and Colonial Policy*, Moscow, 1961 (in Russian).

³ Quoted in V. I. Lenin, "Notebooks on Imperialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 250.

⁴ *La deuxième Internationale...*, p. 28.

towards the colonial issue which was viewed as just one element of the overall militaristic danger.

Like the other socialist parties, the Social-Democratic Party of Germany had to overcome the heritage of the pre-Marxist ideological trends, and, in the first place, Lassalle's ideas. Before they finalised the anti-colonialist positions of the proletariat in the programme in their party, the German Social-Democrats made a series of important political moves exposing the expansionist policy of German militarism. At the time of the emergency laws against the socialists, the illegal organ of the party *Der Sozialdemokrat*, which was published in Zurich, carried a series of anti-colonialist articles. The Erfurt Programme of 1891 proclaimed that the Social-Democratic Party of Germany was fighting "not only against exploitation and oppression of hired workers, but also against all exploitation and oppression whether they are directed against a class, a party, a sex or race".¹ Thus, the party made a step forward since the adoption of the Rules of the First International. The approval of the Erfurt Programme signified that the traditions of scientific socialism and proletarian internationalism had become firmly implanted in the consciousness of the vanguard of the German working class. The international significance of the programme also stemmed from the authority which the German Social-Democratic Party enjoyed at the time.

At the end of the 19th century Eduard Bernstein made an attempt to get the German working class to follow another road. Influenced by the Fabians he interpreted the thesis about the progressive impact of civilisation and development of international economic links in such a way that he arrived at the frankly imperialist idea that the allegedly inevitable colonialist policy and the spread of civilisation were one and the same thing. His efforts to replace the solution of the colonial issue with defence of capitalist progress in the colonies was a direct betrayal of the proletariat and humanism which he professed to regard with great concern. Bernstein went so far as to come out with a blatantly chauvinistic declaration that the natives should be granted only a very

¹ *Programm der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands*, Erfurt, 1891, p. 2.

limited right to the territory they occupy, and that in extreme cases here, too, higher culture had the supreme right. His statement aroused indignation in the German and the international socialist movement, and the Dresden Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (1903) condemned his stand.

Another source of theoretical confusion was Kautsky's idea that the colonial policy was not only unnecessary but even harmful to industrial development. The vehicles of this policy, he said, were society's reactionary and conservative sections (the bureaucracy, the military, commercial monopolists and the nobility).¹ Kautsky's theory reduced imperialism to nothing more than a method of capitalist policy, and ignored its qualitatively new economic foundations. This was before he overtly went over to the positions of social chauvinism. To a degree, his theoretical concepts opposed Bernsteinism, but the arguments were too weak to promote a decisive struggle against revisionism.

The revolutionary part of the German Social-Democrats organised in the parliament and among the masses a series of political campaigns in defence of the Chinese people (1900) and the Eastern African tribe Gerero (1904), against attempts to seize Morocco (1911), etc.²

Left-wing Social-Democrats in Germany did not confine themselves to parliamentary and mass struggle against colonialism. Rosa Luxemburg made an attempt theoretically to interpret the colonial problem.³ She was criticised in Marxist literature for overestimating the significance of the non-capitalist environment for capitalism. Of considerable political importance, however, was her conclusion that in order to deprive capitalism of its reserves it was necessary vigorously to fight against colonial expansion. Her consistent anti-colonialism, her shattering criticism of the myth about

¹ Karl Kautsky, *Colonial Policy. Past and Present*, St. Petersburg, 1900 (in Russian).

² Lothar Rathmann/Gerhard Selzer, "Die Kolonialpolitik des deutschen Imperialismus in Nordafrika, Nahost und Südasien und der anticoloniale Kampf der revolutionären deutschen Arbeiterklasse bis zum 2. Weltkrieg", in: *Arbeiterklasse und nationaler Befreiungskampf*, Leipzig, 1963.

³ Rosa Luxemburg, *Die Akkumulation des Kapitals. Beitrag zur ökonomischen Erklärung des Imperialismus*, Leipzig, 1921.

the culture-spreading mission of capitalism and her elaboration of Marx's idea concerning the role of violence in the formation of the colonial system have retained their importance for the working-class movement to this day.

Rosa Luxemburg never failed to emphasise the connection between the growth of militarism and the military threat, on the one hand, and colonial expansion, on the other. Towards the end of her life she accepted the thesis about the right of nations to self-determination which she had formerly criticised. Thus she completed the transition to the Leninist concept of the national and colonial issue.¹

The revolutionary section of the German working-class movement made theoretical errors in the colonial question. It proved unable to formulate a theoretical foundation for an alliance between the proletariat and the national liberation movement, and approached this problem empirically.

The working-class movement in Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy developed in the same way as in Germany and France, from a united anti-colonial majority to betrayal by the revisionists, and division. The Italian working class worked out particularly determined attacking forms of struggle against colonialism during the Italo-Turkish war of 1911-12.

The 1901 programme of the reformist Social-Democratic Labour Party of the Netherlands did not reject the colonial system but, on the contrary, envisaged its development with the view to attaining colonial self-government. Addressing the Amsterdam Congress (1904) of the Second International, the party's representative van Kol limited the tasks of the socialist parties in the colonies to actions for social reforms. In 1907 the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International turned down his idea of "a socialist colonial policy".

In contrast to the Social-Democratic Labour Party, the Social-Democratic Party of the Netherlands fought for the independence of the Dutch colonies ever since it was founded in 1909. At the time this small party with a membership of 525 in 1914 and 1,089 in 1918, was the only Left-wing Marxist party in Western Europe that had severed

¹ I. S. Yashborovskaya, "Rosa Luxemburg and the Colonial Question", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1971, p. 2

all relations with the opportunists and centrists in its own country. On October 1, 1913 it issued the demand for the "Secession of Indonesia from the Netherlands" which the Party Congress in Leiden in 1914 approved and assumed as the basis of its colonial programme. The Tribunists¹ were the first socialists in Western Europe to formulate a programme on the colonial question in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism.² In 1914 Tribunist Herman Gorter in a brochure entitled "Imperialism, the World War and Social Democracy", which was approved by the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party, detailed the party's colonial policy: "1. Protest against colonial violence and exploitation; 2. Action in defence of the natives and for their liberation so long as they are too weak for revolutionary action; 3. Support for any revolutionary action of the natives and assistance for their struggle for political and national independence as soon as they themselves begin revolutionary action."³ This programme attested to the revolutionary repudiation of the traditions of the Second International which, as Palmiro Togliatti put it, "has never been developed into a complete and open statement of the duty of the workers in capitalist countries of rousing the spirit of revolt in colonial peoples against imperialist oppression and in supporting their revolt by all possible means"⁴

At the time the mistake the Tribunists and for that matter other leftists made was to deny the principle of the self-determination of nations in general. But under the influence of Lenin's work *Socialism and War* which *De Tribune* printed in full in 1915, they supplemented their factual recognition of this principle in essence (for the colonies), with re-

¹ Tribunists were a left-wing opposition group in the Social-Democratic Labour Party of the Netherlands. In 1907 they founded the newspaper *De Tribune* and subsequently set up the Social-Democratic Party of the Netherlands which adopted a position close to that of the Bolsheviks on many issues.

² See: G. G. Bauman, *The Working Class and Socialist Movement in the Netherlands (1861-1918)*, Rostov-on-the-Don, 1975, p. 45 (in Russian).

³ Herman Gorter, *Der Imperialismus, der Weltkrieg und die Sozial-demokratie*. Hrsg. von der Sozial-demokratischen Partei Hollands (S.D.P.), Amsterdam, 1915, p. 14.

⁴ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 68, October 4, 1928, p. 1235.

cognition of this principle in form, too.¹ In the discussion on the self-determination of nations Lenin noted the original point of view of the Tribunists and pointed out that Herman Gorter, who opposed the self-determination of the Netherlands, was nevertheless in favour of "self-determination for the Dutch East Indies oppressed as they are by 'his' nation".² In 1918 the Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of the Netherlands included in its pre-election programme the demand: "Full and free right to self-determination for all overseas possessions and colonies (of the Netherlands—F.B.)."³

Another great service of the Tribunists was their defence of the idea of the joint struggle of the proletariat in the metropolitan countries and the peoples of the colonies against imperialism. On August 3, 1916, David Wijnkoop wrote in the *De Tribune* that the revolutionary proletariat of the Netherlands and Europe jointly with the oppressed peoples of Indonesia and Asia had to strike a lethal blow at European and world capitalism simultaneously. The Tribunists fought against colonialism in the Netherlands proper and supported the national liberation struggle in Indonesia. Their most important contribution to the struggle for Indonesia's national liberation was their participation in the organisation of the socialist and then the communist movement in that colony. The Tribunists welcomed the formation on May 9, 1914, in Surabaya of the Social-Democratic Association, in which an active part was played by members of the Social-Democratic Party of the Netherlands residing in Indonesia. The Party's leadership sought to persuade the Association's leadership to demand secession of Indonesia, and withdraw from the influence of the reformist Social-Democratic Labour Party of the Netherlands.⁴ With the help of the Tribunists the struggle between the leftists and the rightists in the Society led to the withdrawal of the right-wingers from this organisation on September 8, 1917.

¹ See: *De Tribune*, November 13, 1915.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 349.

³ See: D. J. Wijnkoop, *De S.D.P.*, Baarn, 1918, p. 25.

⁴ See: G. G. Bauman, "Tribunists and Indonesia", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1972, No. 1.

With the vigorous participation of the Tribunists the Association was transformed into the Communist Party of Indonesia on May 23, 1920.

In view of a sharp intensification of the national struggle in Austria-Hungary the Austrian Social-Democrats also paid considerable attention to the national problem. The Austrians were the first among the Social-Democrats to adopt at a congress in Brünn (now Brno, Czechoslovakia) in 1899 a special programme on the national question. Lenin wrote in this connection: "There is a very widespread but mistaken opinion that this Congress adopted what is known as 'cultural-national autonomy'. The reverse is true: the latter was unanimously rejected there."¹ The Brünn Programme was a compromise between the principles of territorial and national-cultural autonomies. At the time it was a definite step forward in the development of the Marxist theory on the national question. Later on the proponents of national-cultural autonomy many times demanded a revision of the Brünn Programme. And although their demands were not met and this document remained the only national programme of the Austrian Social-Democrats, the opportunistic theory of the national-cultural autonomy continued to gain ever stronger positions in the party in the ensuing years.²

The beginning of US imperialism's foreign policy expansion elicited a sharply negative response from the politically aware minority of the American working class. At the height of the chauvinistic psychosis engendered by the Spanish-American war of 1898, Eugene Debs proudly declared: "There are thousands (American socialists—*Ed.*) who are not swept from their feet by the war craze. . . . We are opposed to war, but if it ever becomes necessary for us to enlist in the murderous business, it will be to wipe out capitalism, the common enemy of the oppressed and down-trodden of all nations."³ Even the opportunistic leaders of the trade

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Contribution to the History of the National Programme in Austria and in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 99; also see: "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 408-409.

² See: V. M. Turok, "V. I. Lenin and the Brünn Programme on the National Question", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1970, No. 6.

³ Ray Ginger, *The Bending Cross. A Biography of Eugene V. Debs*, New Brunswick, 1949, p. 203.

union movement such as Samuel Gompers, for example, budged from the principle of the trade unions' indifference to politics, and participated in the Anti-Imperialist League. Their pacifism, however, rested on an apologetic attitude towards capitalism and therefore was doomed to failure. Subsequently the gunboat diplomacy of Yankee imperialism evoked a relatively weak response from the working class. Finally, by the beginning of the 20th century the American proletariat failed to put an end to racist feelings in its midst. The more advanced labour leaders did not regard it necessary to uphold specific national demands. "We have nothing to do with it, for it is their fight. We have simply to open the eyes of as many negroes as we can. . . . When the working class have triumphed in the class struggle and stand forth economic as well as political free men, the race problem will disappear."¹

The activity of the leading bodies of the Second International and the colonial issue. Attempts to generalise the experience of the proletariat's anti-colonialist struggle and outline its prospects were made at the meetings of the International Socialist Bureau and at the congresses of the Second International. Two processes were taking place in the working-class movement: the formation of ideological, theoretical and organisational conditions for an alliance between the proletarian and the national liberation movements which emerged after 1917, and the establishment of the social-democratic theory and practice in the colonial question, which prepared the ground for certain trends in the policy of neocolonialism.² It should be borne in mind that the resolutions of the congresses of the Second International were recommendations and not obligatory for its members.

The Zurich Congress which met in August 1893 passed a resolution condemning "the efforts of the French press to

¹ William Z. Foster, *The Negro People in American History*, New York, 1954, p. 403.

² See: V. M. Turok, "The Colonial Policy of the Second International", *Problems of Orientology*, 1959, No. 3; *Social-Reformism and the Colonial Question*, Moscow, 1961 (both in Russian); M. Bri-tovsek, *Stavovi druge internacionale prema ratu i kolonijalnom pitanju*, Beograd, 1965.

incite animosity between the two peoples over the question of Siam".¹

As an independent issue the colonial question was raised at the London Congress in 1896. Two months earlier Jean Jaures wrote: "By constantly exchanging important documents and truthful information on the colonial question the socialists of all countries should build up public opinion capable of bridling the inordinate pretensions of different nations.... It seems to me that the socialists should not confine themselves to issuing theoretical formulas in defining their attitude to the colonial policy.... Naturally, we condemn this policy, for it makes for an ineffective expenditure of wealth and strength which henceforth should be used to improve the lot of the people. We condemn it, for it is a most lamentable consequence of the capitalist system...." But Jaures offered no concrete recommendations and said: "We can denounce all the villanies, all the corruptions and all the cruelties of the colonial expansion, but we can do nothing to arrest them."² In spite of his intolerance of oppression of the enslaved peoples Jaures was far from finding a positive solution of the problem, both in terms of theory and practice. His statement was important because it was an appeal to focus attention on the colonial question.

The resolution on political action adopted at the London Congress contained the following point: "The Congress declares that, whatever the pretext, whether it be religious or in the interests of so called civilisation, colonial extension is only another name for the extension of the area of capitalist exploitation in the exclusive interest of the capitalist class."³ While the characterisation of the content of the colonial policy reflected the already attained relatively high level of internationalism in the international working-class movement, the presentation of the question of the right of nations to self-determination was a basically new feature.

¹ *International Socialist Congresses, St. Petersburg*, p. 73 (in Russian).

² Jean Jaures, *Textes Choisis*, t. 1. "Contre la guerre et la politique coloniale", Editions sociales, Paris, 1959, pp. 97-100.

³ *Full Report of the Proceedings of the International Workers' Congress, London, July and August, 1896*, London, p. 32.

The discussion was initiated by the Socialist Party of Poland which suggested that the Congress should issue a slogan calling for Poland's independence. The debates (particularly K. Kautsky's speech) made it clear that such a presentation of the question was one-sided. The Congress voted for "the full right of all nations to self-determination" and expressed its sympathy "with the workers of any country at present languishing under the yoke of military, national and other absolutism". The discussion of the Polish question, just as of the Irish question half a century before, was a sort of a theoretical laboratory at the stage of the working-class movement when the Marxist views of many revolutionaries and the tactics and strategy of the working class on the national question were being evolved. "We think that this resolution is absolutely correct," Lenin wrote, "and that, to the countries of Eastern Europe and Asia at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is this resolution, with both its parts being taken as an integral whole, that gives the only correct lead to the proletarian class policy in the national question."¹

As a separate point on the agenda the colonial question was first raised at the Paris Congress in 1900. It, too, condemned colonialism and also set forth a programme of action for the proletariat in the struggle against colonialism, which was put forward by Rosa Luxemburg.² "The organised proletariat should use all the means at its disposal to fight the colonial expansion of the bourgeoisie and condemn under all circumstances and with all force the injustices and cruelties that are perpetrated in all parts of the world. For this purpose the Congress proposes in particular the following measures:

- "1. Diverse political parties should study the colonial question wherever economic conditions permit them to do so;
- "2. Encourage the formation of colonial socialist parties associated with the organisations of the metropolitan countries;

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 432.

² Evidently, she was its main author.

"3. Establish relations between the socialist parties in the different colonies."¹

The shortcoming of this resolution compared with the London decision was that it did not demand self-determination, a circumstance which reflected the growth of opportunistic tendencies in the leadership of the Social-Democratic parties. Subsequently in his assessment of this part of the resolution of the Paris Congress Palmiro Togliatti observed: "In the fact that it speaks of socialist parties and not of support to the national liberation movement of the colonies the germs of the future opportunist position can be clearly seen."²

The international co-operation of the socialists in resolving the colonial problem which Jaures insisted should be developed gradually began to take shape. And although the decision to set up socialist parties in the colonies was not fully implemented, the Paris Congress stimulated the first steps towards the establishment of contacts between the working people of the colonies and the metropolitan countries. A number of socialist organisations involving natives of the colonies were formed by the socialists of the Netherlands, France, Britain, and particularly Russia where this work assumed considerable dimensions. Thus, the Paris Congress contributed to the struggle against colonialism.

In line with the decisions of the Congress an International Socialist Bureau, the executive body of the international working-class movement, was organised. At its first plenary meetings the Bureau condemned the imperialist aggression in China, South America and the Philippines. In 1903, on G. V. Plekhanov's initiative³ the Bureau approved a May Day appeal: "May Day — it is an expression of people's contempt for the church and the European governments which permit the infamous massacre of poor Armenians. May Day — these are words of indignation and

¹ *Cinquième Congrès Socialiste International tenu à Paris du 23 au 27 septembre 1900. Compte rendu analytique officiel*, Paris, 1901, p. 107.

² *International Press Correspondence*, No. 68, Thirtieth Session, Aug. 15th, 1928, p. 1235.

³ See: *History of the Second International*, Moscow, 1955, p. 98 (in Russian).

wrath directed against nations calling themselves civilised for their capitalist expeditions: against Britain in the Orange Republic in the Transvaal, against the United States in the Philippines, against Germany in Africa, against Belgium in the Congo, against France in Madagascar, against Russia in Manchuria, against Holland in Sumatra, against Europe in China."¹

The Dutch socialist van Kol who was chosen as the speaker at the Amsterdam Congress in 1904 copiously criticised the colonialist atrocities and highlighted the connection between colonialism and capitalism.² At the same time van Kol's proposals were merely a plan for colonial reforms and not an appeal for a principled struggle against colonialism. In effect, he remained on the positions of early anti-colonialism, and, under imperialist conditions, his idea was just an attempt opportunistically to adapt the policy of the proletariat to that of the bourgeoisie. He compared the peoples of the colonies with "weak and irresponsible children" whom it was impossible to leave to the mercy of fate. And his assumption that colonies would be needed under socialism, too, was a sketch for his future idea about a "socialist colonial policy".

The Amsterdam resolution defined the tasks of the socialists in the colonial question in greater detail: "It is the duty of the socialist parties and of the parliamentary groups: 1. to oppose without any compromise every imperialist or protectionist measure, every colonial expedition, and all military expenses of the colonies;

"2. to fight every monopoly, every concession of vast territories, to prevent that the wealth of the colonial territory should be appropriated by the all-powerful capitalists;

"3. to denounce incessantly the deeds of oppression of which the natives are the victims, to obtain for them the most efficacious measures of protection against military acts of cruelty or capitalist exploitation, to prevent that they should be robbed of their possessions, either by violence or by deceit;

¹ See: G. V. Plekhanov, *Literary Heritage*, Collection, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1934, pp. 131-32 (in Russian).

² *Sixième Congrès Socialiste International tenu à Amsterdam du 14 au 20 août 1904*, Bruxelles, 1904, pp. 42-44.

"4. to propose or to favour all that is conducive to the amelioration of the natives' conditions of life, public works, hygienic measures, schools, etc.; to do their utmost to withdraw them from the influence of the missionaries;

"5. to claim for the natives that liberty and the autonomy compatible with their state of development, bearing in mind that the complete emancipation of the colonies is the purpose to pursue;

"6. to try to bring under parliamentary control the management of the international policy, which as the natural consequence of the capitalist system, is more and more influenced by financial gangs."¹ The appeal of the Congress "to prevent that the wealth of the colonial territory should be appropriated by the all-powerful capitalists" was incorrectly formulated, for in effect it is the proletariat's task to prevent *any* plunder of the wealth of other peoples. The resolution correctly called the proletariat's attention to the need to introduce social reforms in the colonies prior to the victory of the revolution.

The Amsterdam resolution did not single out the slogan on the right of nations to self-determination. It indicated the ultimate goal, namely, the "complete emancipation of the colonies", which can be interpreted as an indication of support for this slogan ("emancipation" that is, "self-determination"). There was a hint of opportunism in designating "emancipation" as the ultimate objective and not as a slogan for immediate political action.

A distinguishing feature of the Amsterdam Congress was that it was attended and addressed by representatives of the Asian peoples. In the centre of attention was the handshake of G. V. Plekhanov and Sen Katayama, representatives of the workers of Russia and Japan, the countries at war with each other. The delegates warmly responded to the speech of Dadabhoy Naoroji, one of the leaders of the Indian National Congress and the first Indian to become a member of the House of Commons of the British Parliament. In line with the programme of the Congress he demanded home rule for India, condemned economic impe-

¹ *International Socialist Congress, Amsterdam 1904. Resolutions, Bruxelles, 1905, pp. 36-37.*

rialism and welcomed "civilising imperialism". He expressed his confidence in the British Parliament.¹ The delegates adopted a special resolution expressing their solidarity with the peoples of India.

G. V. Plekhanov criticised the decision to let delegations of the Bund and the Socialist-Revolutionaries attend the Congress, and wrote: "The oppressed humanity indeed has no other protection today than the revolutionary proletariat. And this, of course, is a great honour for the proletariat. But this has its inconveniences. At time social elements which are actually far removed from the contemporary socialist movement or have only a very faint notion of it, send their representatives to international socialist congresses.... The noble title of representatives of socialist proletarians compels one to be forbearing.... Naturally it is only in extreme cases and only under circumstances which arouse no doubt in their minds, that representatives of the proletariat undertake to push away and remove from their midst representatives of such social strata. In an overwhelming majority of cases they will be told good-naturedly: 'We're very glad to see you. Won't you join us,' without taking into account that such hospitality may be detrimental to the proletarian movement in those countries from where these 'also socialist' representatives of more or less progressive non-proletarian trends come from."² But in his extensive paper Plekhanov said nothing at all about Naoroji's statement which was non-socialist on the whole. Evidently he, too, was aware of its usefulness.

As distinct from the Amsterdam Congress where the contradictions between the revisionists and the "orthodoxians" did not overflow into an open clash, the Stuttgart Congress which met in August 1907 became the venue of an open polemic between them. Heated arguments flared up in the commission concerned with drafting the resolution where the majority proposed that the draft should include the following text: "The Congress does not in principle and for all time reject all colonial policy, which, under a so-

¹ See: G. Fischer, *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

² G. V. Plekhanov, *Works, Moscow-Leningrad, 1923-27, Vol. XVI, pp. 313-15 (in Russian).*

cialist regime, may have a civilising effect.”¹ The minority in the commission refused to accept the majority's point of view and submitted their differences to the plenary meeting of the Congress. A particularly active role among the minority in the commission was played by the Polish left-wing Social-Democrat Julian Marchlewski (pseudonym Kar-ski) and the Bolshevik I. P. Goldenberg (Meshkovsky). The opponents of opportunism proposed that recognition of the colonial policy should be replaced with the following premise: “The Congress believes that owing to its inner substance the capitalist colonial policy is bound to lead to the servitude, slave labour or extermination of the native population of the colonies. The civilising mission to which capitalist society lays claim is merely a cover for its aggressive and exploiting ambitions.” Particularly important was the introduction of a principle antithetical to “socialist colonial policy”. The resolution noted that “only socialist society will enable all peoples to attain supreme culture”.² The minority likewise proposed to delete the plan for an international colonial law.

At the plenary meeting the resolution drawn up by the majority of the commission was supported by the leading revisionists in the international working-class movement — Ramsay MacDonald, Eduard Bernstein, van Kol and Eduard David. Kautsky opposed the resolution. Adhering to what on the whole was a correct position he underscored that the spread of the European civilisation was impossible without the trust of the backward peoples, and that they would acquire such trust only when granted freedom.³ At the same time he confined himself to questions bearing upon the tactics of the proletariat's struggle for democracy and bypassed its strategic aspects. His supporter Georg Ledebour further weakened the positions of the centrists by declaring: “The question of a special theoretical programme is a matter of secondary importance.”⁴

¹ Quoted by V. I. Lenin in “The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 86.

² *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Stuttgart*, Berlin, 1907, p. 25.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

A more definite stance was adopted by the Leninist Julian Marchlewski whose remark that Marx never spoke about the need for all peoples to pass through the stage of capitalism was of especial importance.¹ This statement demonstrated the creative understanding of Marxism on the part of Lenin's supporters who proved that capitalism was inevitable for Russia but not necessarily for all countries. As is known Marx and Engels thought that if there was a revolution in the West, Russia could possibly advance towards communism bypassing the capitalist stage of development.

The delegates evinced their warm sympathy in response to a request by the Indian woman revolutionary Cama to support India's struggle for freedom. But the Congress Chairman Paul Singer was most untactful when he refused to put a resolution in defence of India to the vote on the grounds that it had not been submitted to the Congress Presidium in advance. The Congress approved the anti-colonial resolution by 127 votes to 108, and thus retained its anti-colonial position. The Marxist part of the Congress strained every nerve to rebuff the attacks of the opportunists, with the result that the question of organising practical assistance to the national liberation movement was left in the shade.

At the sittings of the International Socialist Bureau in October 1908 van Kol and his supporters made yet another attempt to supplant the fight against the colonialist policy with a plan of reforms in the colonies. The whole of van Kol's report, Lenin wrote, “was saturated with a spirit, not of proletarian class struggle, but of the most petty-bourgeois — and even worse, bureaucratic — peddling of ‘reforms’”.² Van Kol's recommendations failed to win the Bureau's support.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33. Clearly it is impossible to get a full idea of the nature of the discussion from the short minutes of the commission sitting. Researchers are yet to avail themselves of the opportunity of reconstructing the debates at the sitting of the commission on the basis of reports on its work which were printed in the socialist press in many countries, and the correspondence and reminiscences of its participants.

² V. I. Lenin, “Meeting of the International Socialist Bureau”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 245.

The question of the attitude towards Zionism constituted another important aspect of the struggle of the revolutionary internationalist wing of the international working-class movement against nationalistic ideology.¹

On the whole, however, in their speeches and resolutions on the colonial question the leaders of the main Social-Democratic parties and the Second International gradually deviated from Marxist positions in the direction of opportunism and chauvinism in spite of powerful resistance by left-wing elements, the Leninists in the first place. A major shortcoming of the Second International's documents is that they do not directly raise the question of the establishment of an inviolable alliance between the proletariat of the metropolitan countries and the oppressed peoples of the colonies. A comparison of the proceedings of the Second International congresses and the activities of the socialist organisations of individual countries shows that neither the acute and universal nature of the colonial problems, nor the possibility of finding profoundly internationalist decisions were adequately reflected in the programmes of the working-class movement. The basic failing not only of the resolutions but of practical activity was the discrepancy between word and deed. And this was an indication of the bourgeois degeneration of right-wing Social Democracy and the leadership of the Second International.

The Leninist stage in the development of the Marxist concept of the national and colonial question. The Marxists of Russia absorbed, continued and developed the old traditions of joint struggle of different nationalities against the autocracy, which were created by the preceding generations of revolutionaries. When the London Congress of the International in 1896 adopted a resolution recognising the right of nations to self-determination, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) was the first socialist party at its Second Congress in 1903 to introduce this slogan into its programme. In order to do this the revolutionary nucleus of the RSDLP had to surmount the ideological influence

¹ See: L. Y. Dadiani, "The International Working-Class Movement and Zionism in the Period of the Second International", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1975, No. 5.

of European Social-Democracy and its theory of "cultural-national autonomy", and "national-nihilistic", nationalistic and parochial tendencies in the working-class movement in Russia.¹ In the course of its long years of ideological and organising work and in its agitation and propaganda, the RSDLP theoretically and practically asserted the idea of the fraternity of the working people of all nationalities and exposed chauvinism in all parts of the world, Russia in the first place. The Party's programme also reflected the basic theoretical achievements of the international working-class movement (the Erfurt Programme of 1891 and the resolution of London Congress of 1896), and the specific conditions obtaining in Russia at the time. At its First Congress the Party decided to call itself *Rossiyskaya* (i.e., a party of all the nationalities of Russia) and not *Russkaya* meaning simply Russian. The ideas of proletarian internationalism permeated all the decisions adopted at congresses and conferences of the Party and its entire concrete practical activity (pamphlets, the press, the tactics of the Social-Democratic deputies in the State Duma, etc.). As distinct from the working-class movement in some Western countries where for many years it proved impossible to organise the joint struggle of the white and "coloured" workers, Social-Democracy in Russia simply did not have this problem on its hands. The socialist movement firmly adhered to internationalist positions both in regions which were not colonies in the economic terms and where the nationality problem did not coincide with the colonial question (the Baltic Republics, Finland, Poland, etc.) and in the backward border areas (Siberia, the Volga Region, Central Asia, Transcaucasia).

The working-class movement in Russia owed this feature to the role played by the colonies in the system of Russian imperialism (geographic unity of the metropolitan territory and the colonies and the problem of the proletariat's allies

¹ T. Burmistrova, *The National Policy of the Bolshevik Party in the First Russian Revolution of 1905-1907*, Leningrad, 1962; T. Burmistrova, *The Leninist Policy of Proletarian Internationalism in the Period of the Formation of the RSDLP (1894-1903)*, Leningrad, 1965; N. F. Sheetov, *The Development by Lenin of the Ideology and Policy of Proletarian Internationalism*, Moscow, 1966 (all in Russian).

at both the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist stages of the revolution in Russia).¹

The attitude of some Austrian and American labour leaders at the Amsterdam and Stuttgart congresses to immigrants from Asia was directly opposite to the position of the RSDLP on this issue. "Eviction is not the way to combat the influx and competition of the Persian workers. Police controls won't prevent a starving person from crossing the border in search of food. Determined, painstaking work to organise and rally together the Persian workers and the workers of other nationalities into a single trade union with the view to waging a common struggle for common goals here, on the spot, is the only possible means for each class-conscious worker," wrote the *Bakinskii Rabochii*.² In spite of language and ethnical differences, workers arriving from Iran, China and Korea more or less quickly joined the proletarian movement in Russia. At the same time the Russian workers who went to work at Russian concessions in Manchuria (the Chinese Eastern Railway in the first place) and at the Caspian fisheries in Iran, actively involved local workers into the struggle against the common enemy — Russian imperialism. A series of successful strikes of the Russian proletariat at the Chinese Eastern Railway, at the timber and mining concessions in Manchuria, the oil fields in Baku and on the Iranian coast of the Caspian became a political school for many thousands of working people in Asian countries.

The RSDLP engaged in systematic work among the oppressed nationalities of Russia. It organised the publication of periodicals in the languages of the national minorities. In Azerbaijan several periodicals influenced by Marxism (*Gummet*, *Tekmyul*, *Devat-koch*, *Yeldash* and *Molla Nasreddin*) were published at different times. The Bolshevik newspaper *Ural* in the Tartar language had readers in Bashkiria, Kazakhstan and Kirghizia. A conference of Social-Democratic organisations in Turkestan in 1907 adopted a special resolution on drawing the people of local nationalities in Party work. Researchers note that several score of representatives

¹ *History of the USSR Since Ancient Times to Our Day*, in 12 volumes, Vol. VI, Moscow, 1969, pp. 12, 37, 316 (in Russian).

² *Bakinskii Rabochii*, Sept. 6, 1908.

of the peoples of Central Asia and Iran took part in the revolutionary activity of the RSDLP. Most successful activity in the Transcaucasus was conducted by the Gummet organisation which was set up to work among Azerbaijan workers and migrant workers from Iran.¹

Back in December 1895, in a work entitled "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", Lenin noted that it was necessary to demand "freedom of religion and equality of all nationalities".² He returned to the subject at the end of May 1897: "The Social-Democrats support every revolutionary movement against the present social system, they support all oppressed nationalities, persecuted religions, downtrodden social estates, etc., in their fight for equal rights."³

Working on the national problem at the beginning of the 20th century, Lenin concentrated most on bringing the workers of different nationalities together and consolidating the alliance between the working-class movement and the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples. In his theses "Concerning Certain Speeches by Workers' Deputies" (written in November 1912) which formed the basis for a declaration issued by the Social-Democratic faction at the Fourth State Duma, Lenin pointed out: "It is highly important to put forward in precise terms the slogan of the *political self-determination* of all nationalities, in contrast to all hedging (such as only 'equality')."⁴ He repeatedly pointed out in his works that the proletariat of all nations faced a double task, that of recognising the right of nations to self-determination and forming an alliance of proletarians of all nations surmounting the reactionary aspect of nationalism. In his economic studies Lenin disclosed the economic essence of Russia's borderlands as the colonies of Russian capitalism. He regarded the national question in these regions as both national and colonial.

¹ N. K. Belova, "Migrant Workers from Northwest Iran", *Questions of History*, 1956, No. 10, pp. 112-21 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 97.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 334.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Concerning Certain Speeches by Workers' Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 417.

In the next stage of his work on the national and colonial question, Lenin ascertained the substance of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, as the epoch of imperialist wars and socialist revolutions. Imperialism means that "national oppression has been extended and heightened on a new historical foundation".¹ Under monopoly capitalism national liberation movements develop with especial force and favourable conditions are created for extensive co-operation between the proletariat and the colonial peoples. "Liberation of the colonies ... means self-determination of nations. Europeans often forget that colonial peoples too are nations, but to tolerate this 'forgetfulness' is to tolerate chauvinism."² Recognition that anti-colonial national wars were both possible and progressive under imperialism was an element of the Lenin's teaching on socialist revolution. On this basis Lenin reached the conclusion that the enslaved peoples had to have the active assistance of the proletariat in exercising their right to self-determination including secession at the bourgeois-democratic and socialist stages of the revolution. He refuted P. Kievsky (G. Pyatakoy)³ who asserted that it was foolish to put forward the slogans of a workers' party for "countries where there are no workers". Lenin said that "the democratic part of our programme ... is addressed specifically to the whole people..."⁴ An important element of Lenin's theory is the idea that "in Asia there is still a bourgeoisie capable of championing sincere, militant, consistent democracy, a worthy comrade of France's great men of the Enlightenment and great leaders of the close of the eighteenth century".⁵ This idea played a major

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 408.

² V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 63.

³ G. L. Pyatakoy (pseudonym P. Kievsky), (1890-1937) joined the Bolshevik Party in 1910. During the Civil War he was a member of the Soviet Government of the Ukraine and held a number of other important posts. He was active in several factional groups and was expelled from the Communist Party for his anti-Party activity.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 64.

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "Democracy and Narodism in China", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 165.

role in surmounting the left-sectarian tendencies which manifested themselves in the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependencies in the ensuing decades. A very important role was played by Lenin's struggle against Bernstein's opportunistic infatuation with capitalist progress, and against the vindication of capitalism with references to the requirements of "progress": "*Resistance to colonial policy and international plunder by means of organising the proletariat, by means of defending freedom for the proletarian struggle, does not retard the development of capitalism but accelerates it, forcing it to resort to more civilised, technically higher methods of capitalism. And this just suits us, this just suits the proletariat.*"¹

Following Lenin Marxist researchers began serious theoretical study of the social processes occurring in the East. First and foremost they assumed the initiative in spreading true information about the Asian countries and the position of the peoples enslaved by tsarism. Besides illuminating the revolution in Iran objectively and with good-will the Social-Democratic press of Russia also acted as a collective organiser of assistance to oppressed people of that neighbouring country. Russia's Marxists took the lead in evolving the theory of the national and colonial question. Prior to the First World War the struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples of Russia against military and feudal imperialism was actually a powerful anti-colonial movement. It was the first successful practical experience of an alliance of the proletariat and the peoples of the colonies uniting the revolutionary efforts of Russia's proletariat and oppressed peoples.

At the turn of the century the proletariat of the metropolitan countries became the leading force in the struggle against imperialist colonialism and racialism, and for the genuine equality of all peoples. Defence of the oppressed people ceased to be the concern of individuals and small political groups and developed into an important task of the mass working-class movement. The hero of the anti-colonial struggle was no longer a person who acted alone but a peo-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "To Maxim Gorky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, pp. 438-39.

ple's tribune, a publicist and organiser of the masses such as Jaures, Wilhelm and Karl Liebknecht and many others. The mass working-class movement in Europe began to interfere actively in the future of the colonial peoples.

In the period of the Second International the working-class movement took the first steps towards establishing an alliance with the national liberation movement. When the Second International was about to collapse, Lenin formulated the first theoretical foundations for resolving the national-colonial question. His work brought to completion the quest conducted by a whole generation of Marxists of the period of the establishment of imperialism (the works of Rosa Luxemburg, Julian Marchlewski, Mikhail Pavlovich, Theodore Rothstein, Paul Louis, Karl Kautsky, Georgi Plekhanov and others). There also emerged a tradition of practical and efficient co-operation of the labour organisations of the metropolitan countries with the labour and the national liberation movements in the colonies (personal links between the functionaries of the working-class movement and organisations, or individual patriots in Asian and African countries, the use of the labour press in the West as a tribune of the anti-colonialists in the East, the establishment of the first socialist organisations in the colonies, employment of all the methods of parliamentary and mass struggle of the proletariat against colonial expansion, etc.).

The leaders of patriotic organisations surmounted social and ethnic prejudices, won allies and searched for ways of saving their peoples. They virtually groped their way in order to ascertain what social forces in the world were the most reliable mainstay for the independence of their peoples. The two torrents of the world revolutionary process began to converge simultaneously, but slowly and spontaneously and this convergence assumed complex and contradictory forms.

Personal links with the leaders of the international working class proved to be very useful for the national liberation movement. A number of facts bear this out. The founder of the Communist Party of Turkey Mustafa Subhi met Jaures several times. In 1908 newspapers reported that the Tabriz Revolutionary Committee asked Jaures to get the French press to force Russia to withdraw its support for

the Shah, for without the help of the Russian autocracy the reaction would be unable to defeat the revolution. The Indian patriot P. Krishna corresponded with the leader of the Austrian socialists Victor Adler.

Over a period of several years Sun Yat-sen was connected with the International Socialist Bureau. On the initiative of Sun Yat-sen and his representative in Europe, Han Ju-tse, the Bureau Secretary Camille Huysmans discussed the possibility of sending European socialist MPs to the sittings of the Chinese parliament irrespective of whether or not the Chinese Republic was recognised by European powers. This move was designed to win at least *de facto* recognition of the Chinese republic. The Yuan Shi-kai¹ coup frustrated this plan. In September 1913 the International Socialist Bureau called upon European socialists to protest the granting of loans to Chinese reaction.²

At the end of June or in July 1908 an anonymous Iranian socialist sent a letter to Kautsky from Tabriz.³ It is possible to judge of the questions it contained by Kautsky's reply who focussed his attention on a general characterisation of the revolution in Iran. "In a democratic movement supported by all the working sections of the country," he

¹ Yuan Shi-kai (1859-1916), Chinese politician. In 1912 he got Sun Yat-sen to resign the post of President of the Chinese Republic ("Yuan Shi-kai coup") and established a military dictatorship which protected the interests of the imperialists in China.

² *Deuxième Internationale et l'Orient*, Paris, 1967, p. 57. V. I. Lenin opposed the granting of a loan to Yuan Shi-kai as early as in May 1913 (See V. I. Lenin, "Backward Europe and Advanced Asia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 100) thus initiating the first campaign of solidarity of the European proletariat with the Chinese people.

³ Kautsky received the letter on July 31, and his reply which was written in France was dated August 1, 1908. He begins his letter with an apology for taking so long to reply. Evidently the sending of the illegal letter from Iran to Germany and its subsequent forwarding to France took considerable time. The letter was addressed to one person and began with the words: "Dear comrade". Kautsky's reply was published in the newspapers *Mshak* (in Armenian) on November 9, 1908 and *Ali* (in Georgian) on December 18, 1908, and in the journal *Borba* (organ of the Tiflis Bolsheviks) Nos. 2-4, July-October 1908, pp. 3-5. This letter is not registered in the bibliography of Kautsky's works because the original has been lost. We have reconstructed the text by collating the published Russian, Georgian and Armenian translations.

wrote, "there always exist reactionary tendencies represented by certain sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. This, however, is not a reason to refrain from struggle, but only a reason to combat these reactionary tendencies in the democratic movement. In 1848 Marx applied this tactic in Germany where conditions for the formation of a powerful proletarian party were still lacking. Hostility towards foreign capital does not necessarily have to be reactionary in content. Of course, Persia like other countries needs railways and large industry. But Persia has already taken the capitalist road, and perhaps it will advance along this road all the faster if it is not exploited by foreign capital. This capital appears in Persia not only in the form of industrial capital, but also and to a greater extent in the form of moneylending capital. In this form it exploits the entire nation, including the peasants who through their taxes pay the interest on state debts. Consequently, the peasants grow poorer and are unable to purchase industrial goods. That is why foreign capital in Persia, just as in Russia, inhibits the development of the home market, which is an essential precondition for large-scale industrial growth. When an end is put to the exploitation of Persia by foreign capital, the domestic market will develop and so will domestic capital, because surplus value will remain in the country. If the proletarian movement is to develop, not only political freedoms for democracy are necessary but also the nation's independence from foreign influence, and not only political, but also economic independence. By shaking off the capitalist yoke in their countries, the peoples of East weaken European capitalism and strengthen the European proletariat."

The above lines provoked no serious controversy between the Iranian and Russian socialists who were working in Tabriz, although their simplification is obvious to the modern reader. Discussions unfolded over questions of tactics of the socialists in the national liberation and anti-feudal movement. Kautsky wrote: "But socialists enter this struggle not as vulgar democrats with the illusions of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democracy. When they speak of the democratic struggle, they understand it as a class struggle. They know that the victory of democracy does not signify the end of a political struggle and that this victory is the

threshold of new battles previously unknown and impossible under absolutism." Kautsky did not say whether it was necessary to create a purely Social-Democratic organisation under these conditions. Evidently his silence should be regarded as an indication of his negative attitude to such projects. The small group of socialists in Tabriz centred their attention on the possibility and advisability of forming a purely Marxist social-democratic party under the conditions of a bourgeois, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution and the non-existence of machine production and modern proletariat.

The materials of this polemic (all related to the autumn of 1908) were sent to Plekhanov. According to a protocol dated October 16(29), 1908, a proposal to organise an independent, purely Marxist Social-Democratic group in Tabriz to guide the general democratic struggle was approved by 28 votes to two. The difference between this decision and Kautsky's position was obvious. The minority maintained that the formation of a proletarian organisation could have pushed radical bourgeois elements into the arms of the reaction, whereas the revolution in Iran called for the combined activity of all the discontented and protesting elements. Those who opposed the formation of a purely social-democratic organisation suggested that they should operate within the revolutionary democracy as its most radical element which was prepared to work on a socialist foundation when conditions for this had matured.¹ So far, Plekhanov's reply has not been discovered. The arguments between Iranian socialists and their correspondence with Kautsky and Plekhanov merit a special analysis, inasmuch as they constitute one of the first attempts practically to implement Marxism in a semi-colonial country.

The European socialist press regularly published interviews and articles by patriots in Asian countries addressed to Western public. This was yet another form of contacts between the working-class movement in the West and the national liberation movement in the East. G. Fischer wrote that the British socialist press carried about ten articles by

¹ G. V. Plekhanov's *Philosophical and Literary Heritage*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1973, pp. 107-22 (in Russian).

Indians at the beginning of the 20th century.¹ The theoretical organ of the German Social-Democratic Party *Neue Zeit* printed several reports from Iran between 1909 and 1912.² *L'Humanité* published an interview with an Indian socialist whose name was not disclosed.³ The journal *La Guerre Sociale* published as a supplement a brochure containing an essay on the revolutionary movement in China. It was signed by two pseudonyms, the European "Harmol" and the Chinese "Kemintan" (Kuomintang?).⁴

Some of Sun Yat-sen's articles also appeared in the European socialist press. On July 15, 1912, the Bolshevik newspaper *Nevskaya Zvezda* published a translation of Sun Yat-sen's article "The Social Significance of the Chinese Revolution" originally printed in the Belgian newspaper *Le Peuple*.⁵ The same issue of *Nevskaya Zvezda* carried Lenin's article "Democracy and Narodism in China"⁶ which was a reply to Sun Yat-sen. Of considerable interest was a report filed by M. Rachline and C. Weill concerning Sun Yat-sen's article which was published in the Flemish newspaper *Vooruit* several years earlier, in 1906.⁷

Particularly effective forms of alliance were worked out by the proletariat of Russia. At times the internationalist activity of the RSDLP crossed the borders of the Russian Empire proper, a case in point was its assistance to the Iranian revolution.⁸ The October Revolution was the first example of the success of the alliance between the proletar-

¹ G. Fischer, *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

² Evidently the first article was written at Kautsky's request (see: *Neue Zeit*, February 1909, No. 20, pp. 720-26).

³ *Deuxième Internationale et l'Orient*, pp. 367-69.

⁴ Harmol et Kemintan, "La révolution chinoise", suppl. à *La Guerre Sociale*, mai 1908. A copy is deposited in the rare books department of the Lenin Library in Moscow; formerly it was in P. Kropotkin's library.

⁵ Sun Yat-sen, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 563-66 (in Russian). The same article appeared in the French socialist journal *Le mouvement socialiste*, No. 243, 1912.

⁶ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 48, pp. 163-69.

⁷ *Deuxième Internationale et l'Orient*, p. 49.

⁸ F. B. Belelyubsky and N. K. Belova, "The Socialists' First Links With the National Liberation Movement", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1970, No. 4.

ians and the oppressed peoples on the scale of a whole country.

At the same time humanistic, democratic anti-colonialism lost none of its significance. Statements against colonial oppression by such celebrated writers as George Bernard Shaw, Leo Tolstoi, Anatole France and Romain Rolland won widespread approval and tremendously influenced the formation of public opinion.

After the outbreak of the First World War the leaders of the Second International turned their backs on proletarian internationalism. Nevertheless, the consistently revolutionary part of the socialists continued to fight against imperialism and colonialism. At the time Lenin worked hard to unite the internationalists of all countries. In this he had the support of revolutionary socialists in all Social-Democratic parties. Thanks to the efforts of socialists-internationalists who organised the Zimmerwalde movement, the honour of the working class was saved. From sporadic contacts at the beginning of the 20th century and the intense ideological quest which was conducted later, after the October Socialist Revolution there emerged a potent alliance of the proletariat of the capitalist countries and the colonial peoples, one of whose effective prerequisites was the experience of the past. There is an undoubtable ideological and, in some measure, organisational continuity between the activity of the Communist International in the East and the preceding struggle both of the working class and the national liberation movements.

The Great October Socialist Revolution which inspired the Communist International was a turning point in the struggle for the unity of the working people in the industrialised countries and the peoples of the colonies and dependencies. A foundation was laid for their cogent alliance in the joint struggle against imperialism, an alliance which now relied on the full might of proletarian international solidarity, on the international communist movement, on a profound understanding of the community of interests of the allies and on Soviet Russia, the bulwark of world revolution.

EASTERN INTERNATIONALISTS IN RUSSIA AND SOME QUESTIONS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT (1918-JULY 1920)

M. A. PERSITS

The Great October Socialist Revolution which inspired the oppressed peoples of the East to rise to a determined anti-imperialist struggle for independence, marked the beginning of the communist movement in the countries of Asia and Africa. This was a particularly vivid manifestation of great influence of the ideas of the October Revolution upon the peoples of the colonies and dependent countries.

The young Communists in the Asian countries came up against extremely complicated problems which had to be theoretically understood and practically solved. It was necessary to solve the question of building up communist movement in the backward countries where the working class was either very weak or did not exist at all. It was necessary to ascertain the nature of the forthcoming revolution in these countries and then define the attitude of the working class and its party towards the national liberation movement. It was also necessary to work out questions concerning the correlation between the socialist and national liberation revolutions.

The Comintern began working on these problems under Lenin's guidance at its Second Congress which met in July 1920. But even prior to that, the problems of the national liberation revolutions were examined and solved in the course of the practical activity of the revolutionaries of the East, particularly in countries adjoining Russia and more

than others subject to the influence of the October Revolution.

On their part, Russia's Communists were no less interested in ascertaining "how to apply the communist tactics and policy in pre-capitalist conditions".¹ They played an especially active role in working out diverse problems of the struggle for the liberation of the East and were in the centre of the theoretical activity in this field. This is understandable, for many of them worked in the former tsarist colonies liberated by the October Revolution where it was necessary to introduce a new order guaranteeing the independence and equality of the peoples as socialist construction progressed. Moreover, a large number of Soviet Communists were in daily contact with thousands of people from the Eastern countries who found themselves in Soviet Russia owing to various circumstances.

CITIZENS OF ADJOINING EASTERN COUNTRIES IN SOVIET RUSSIA

Russia has long common borders with many Eastern countries and others, India, for example, lie close. This being the case a fairly large part of Russia's population was in constant economic, political and cultural contact with the peoples of China, Korea, Mongolia, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan and India. In many respects this accounted for the powerful influence of the October Revolution upon the nearby Eastern countries. Even more significant in this respect was that there were literally hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants and representatives of other sections of the population from China, Korea, Iran, Turkey and India in the former Russian Empire in the period of the October Revolution and the Civil War. Most of the Turks in Russia were former prisoners of war — 63,000 men and officers of the Turkish Army.² They lived in POW

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 242.

² *Russia in the World War of 1914-1918 (in figures)*, Moscow, 1925, p. 41, table 33 (in Russian).

camps scattered across the country. The second group of about 50 or 60 thousand¹ were Russian citizens of Turkish origin who lived in the south of Russia. They had been interned when the First World War began and then resettled in regions far inside Russia.² The third group of Turks consisted of migrant workers.³ There were more or less large groups of Turks in Turkestan (Tashkent, Ashkhabad and Alma-Ata), in many towns of the Volga Area (Kazan, Astrakhan, Saratov, Samara), in Central and Southern Russia (Ryazan, Odessa) and in the Urals and Siberia.

An even greater number of migrant workers came from Iran, mostly to the Central Asian regions bordering on Iran — the Caspian, Syr-Darya and Ferghana regions. Quite a large number of them remained in Tashkent, Ashkhabad, Bukhara, Charjow, Khiva and other towns, very many settled in Baku and other towns in Azerbaijan.⁴ The movement of Iranian migrant workers into Russia began at the end of the 19th century and continued on an ever increasing scale so that by 1920 there were up to 100,000 Iranians in Central Asia alone.⁵ Most of them were ruined peasants, handicraftsmen and workers, who earned a living as farm labourers, loaders, yard-keepers and unskilled workers. Many got jobs at factories, railways and oil fields. Representatives of the national bourgeoisie also arrived from Iran.

Indian merchants lived for long periods in Bukhara and other Central Asian cities where they sold their wares.

¹ E. Ludushveit, "Conference of Left-Wing Turkish Socialists in Moscow in the Summer of 1918", *Collection of Eastern Studies*, Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Yerevan, 1964, Vol. II, p. 174.

² Zhyzn Natsionalnostei. (*The Life of Nationalities*), January 4, 1920.

³ In the Ryazan river port, for instance, there was a Turkish Water Transport Artel. See the Central Party Archive of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism (CPA IML), Moscow, section 17, register 2, file 65, p. 70.

⁴ See: A. M. Matveyev, "From the History of Iranian Revolutionary Organisations in Central Asia at the Beginning of the 20th Century", *Relations Between the Peoples of Central Asia and the Adjacent Countries of the East*, Tashkent, 1963, pp. 134, 135, 138 (in Russian).

⁵ See: "First Congress of the Persian Communists of the Adalat Party", *Communist International*, 1920, No. 4, p. 2889 (in Russian).

Among the peoples of the Eastern countries living in Russia between 1917 and 1920, there was a particularly large number of workers from China who were hired during the war for unskilled work to keep up supplies for the front. On top of that tens of thousands of ruined citizens of China came to Russia in search of a living.

Sinkiang Uighurs and other Muslim peoples made up a considerable proportion of the migrant workers from China. At the beginning of the 1920s there were 279,000 Chinese Muslims in various parts of Turkestan. Most of them were unskilled workers in coal mines and at cotton ginneries and many were hired to pick cotton, to work on rice paddies, etc. There were also some traders from Sinkiang and from China proper.¹ In 1918, according to estimates, there were up to 70,000 Chinese workers in Russia's central gubernias and up to 400,000 in Siberia.² By the middle of 1922 there were approximately 200,000 Chinese in the Far East³ and about 150,000 by the beginning of 1923.⁴

Koreans made up a large proportion of the Eastern population in Russia. The immigration of Koreans into Russia increased after 1910, when Japan annexed Korea and turned it into a colony. Towards the end of 1922 the Korean population in the Russian Far East reached approximately 250,000, and 50,000 of them acquired Russian citizenship.⁵ The majority of the Korean immigrants were tenant farmers who had fallen into poverty or ruin at home and hoped to improve their position in a foreign country. There was also a large number of unskilled workers who had lost their jobs or had been brutally exploited by Korean and foreign entrepreneurs.

It follows that in the period from 1917 to 1920 there were no less than one million citizens of contiguous coun-

¹ See: I. S. Sologubov, *Foreign Communists in Turkestan (1918-1921)*, Tashkent, 1961, p. 43 (in Russian).

² See: *Izvestia*, July 18, 1918; evidently not only in Siberia, but in the Russian Far East, too.

³ See: *The Economy of the Far East*, 1922, Nos. 5-6, p. 177 (in Russian).

⁴ See: *Report of the Far Eastern Bureau of the CC RCP(B) for the Period October 1, 1922-January 1, 1923*, CPA IML, s. 17, r. 15, f. 205, p. 123.

⁵ *Ibid.*

tries of the East in Soviet Russia. They became eyewitnesses of the turbulent events of the October Revolution and the Civil War, and the workers and peasants who comprised an overwhelming majority of them were filled with hatred for domestic and foreign oppressors. Having fallen into ruin in their own countries where they were deprived of all rights, these people found freedom and equality in the Soviet Republic. Working side by side with Russian workers and peasants they assimilated their sentiments and thoughts and became receptive to the liberation ideas of the October Revolution.

The October Revolution and the first decrees of Soviet power, such as the decrees on peace, on land and, particularly, on the right of nations to freedom and independence made a great impression in the colonial countries of the East and proved to be a very important factor in the formation of a mass anti-colonial, anti-imperialist thrust among the oppressed peoples who now more and more closely connected the struggle for the national liberation of their countries with the idea of defending Soviet power. All this manifested itself in the behaviour of tens of thousands of the progressive-minded workers of the East who were in Soviet Russia at the time. They responded to the Civil War and foreign intervention by mass participation in the armed struggle against the Whiteguards and foreign invaders. Persian, Korean, Turkish, Chinese units and even large formations fought in the ranks of the Red Army on the fronts of the Civil War. Many Indian soldiers who were with the British occupying forces in Iran refused to fight against the Red Army when in May 1920 it hammered the Whiteguard and British units entrenched near Enzeli. Hundreds of Indian soldiers went over to the side of the Red Army and some of them took part in its operations against the local counter-revolutionary forces (*basmach*), and the Whiteguards in Turkestan. No less significant, perhaps, was the desire which appeared among working people in China, Korea and Turkey to participate directly in the revolutionary struggle of the Soviet people, which they often carried into reality. All this was a clear indication of their understanding that the battle for Soviet power and against the interventionists and the Whiteguards was the

most effective form of struggle against the imperialist yoke. On many occasions Chinese guerrilla detachments operating against the Japanese imperialists in Manchuria crossed into the Far Eastern Republic and put themselves under command of its military leaders to fight the common enemy on the fronts of the Civil War.¹ A considerable number of Korean guerrilla detachments who fought against the Japanese enslavers in Korea or in Eastern Manchuria (Kando Region) did the same thing.²

There is also evidence concerning the mood of the Turkish working people. In January 1920 an interesting document was received in Moscow from representatives of a meeting of delegates of a number of Turkish trade unions and the so-called Organisation of Labour Leaders (evidently they were factory shop-stewards) from an unspecified town. The letter, actually a resolution passed at this meeting, was addressed to the Presidium of the Russian Party of Communists-Bolsheviks. On the left side of the page there was a stamp reading "Organisation of Labour Leaders No 227" and on the right, the letter,³ which said: "We, Turkish workers, who are more oppressed than the workers of other countries exploited by capitalism and imperialist parties, remain to this day in the terrible paws of our authorities and the European bourgeoisie. *Wishing to choose an intermediary for our participation in the Great Russian Revolution* (my italics—*M. P.*) we convened a conference of representatives of our organisation officially empowered to choose a comrade who would act as an intermediary, and also representatives from other industrial labour unions. On the basis of a resolution passed at the meeting in behalf of independent unions with a membership of approximately 50-60 thousand workers, who had been trained at special technical schools, we delegate the editor of the newspaper *Science and Industry*, a young technical worker and one of our most highly valued comrades Mustafa Nafe,

¹ For details see: M. A. Persits, *The Far Eastern Republic and China*, Moscow, 1962, p. 197 (in Russian).

² See: S. A. Tsyppin, "Korean Working People in the Struggle Against the Interventionists in the Soviet Far East (1918-1922)", *Questions of History*, 1957, No. II, p. 175 (in Russian).

³ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 203, p. 22.

which is duly certified."¹ In spite of the rather poor translation, the document clearly shows the desire of advanced workers and a part of the Turkish intelligentsia to go to Russia to discuss the participation of the working people of Turkey in the struggle for the consolidation of Soviet power.

The October Revolution and the activity of the Soviet Government elicited not only great interest among the revolutionary circles in the Eastern countries, but also an insistent desire directly to study and emulate Russia's experience in resolving problems involved in securing liberty from imperialism and feudalism. Characteristically enough, even the national revolutionary elements in far-off India began to display a lively interest in the Soviets. As early as in 1918 the prominent revolutionary leader of the national movement Lokamanya Tilak in the newspaper *Kesari* published an article about Lenin in which for the first time he legally wrote about the Russian revolution and its leader.² Beginning that year the Bengali humanist Ramanad Chatterji regularly published articles by different authors about the October Revolution and Soviet power in the *Modern Review* journal. In February 1919 the journal formulated its conclusion about the activities of Soviet Communists in the following terms: "The Bolshevik is striv-

¹ The list of signatures that followed was quite interesting: "Chairman of the Organisation of Labour Representatives Nurisia, Chief Secretary Osman Sami, Secretary Agah Urgan, Treasurer Shehabettin Osman, controller Taufik, foreman at a rifle factory Ihsan, worker at the guncarriage department of an ordnance factory (no name—M. P.), Deputy Director of a military technical school engineer Mustafa Nafe, teacher at a regional technical school Djalal, representative of a technical school for orphans Sayfettin, Chairman of union of thread-making factories Muhtar Halit, member of society for workers' progress electrical engineer Kamirran Sirri, members of the Organisation of Labour Representatives Suleyman and Mustafa" and a fingerprint (owing to illiteracy) in behalf of the union of forge and press workers. There are also illegible Russian markings on the letter and signatures which were made either at the CC RCP(B), or in the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East. The date 21.I.1920 can be read quite clearly. At the end of the document in red ink are the words "translated by member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee Markizov".

² S. G. Sardesai, *India and Russian Revolution*, New Delhi, 1967, p. 21.

ing to make Russia better and nobler than anything she has ever been before."¹ In that period many representatives of the revolutionary forces of the East began to visit Soviet Russia.

National revolutionaries in India began to make trips to Moscow back in 1918, and hundreds of Indians came to Soviet Russia in 1920. Among them were both politically organised and unorganised fighters for India's liberation. The first politically organised group to establish contact with the Russian Federation (RSFSR) was the so-called Provisional Indian Government which was set up in Kabul in 1915. Its head Mahendra Pratap and his deputy Maulvi Barkatullah arrived in the Soviet Republic early in 1918 and at the beginning of 1919 respectively. Two other representatives of the Kabul centre Mohammad Ali and Mohammad Safiq arrived in Tashkent in April 1920. Barkatullah conducted anti-imperialist propaganda among the former Turkish POWs in Soviet Russia and often wrote articles for Soviet newspapers summoning the Muslim peoples to rally round the Soviets and fight the imperialists together.

In July 1920, 28 members of the Indian Revolutionary Association, which was founded and began to operate in Kabul at the end of 1919, arrived in Tashkent.² The group was headed by Abdur-Rabb-Barg and P. B. Acharya. The ideological, political and tactical views of these national revolutionary groups were quite interesting. They had very similar national democratic programmes all of which had a tendency towards socialism and envisaged the attainment of full national independence for India and its reorganisation into a federal republic. The Indian revolutionaries were already aware that the achievement of this goal depended on the formation of a lasting alliance between the Indian national liberation movement and Soviet Russia. But the Kabul centre and the Indian Association continued to base their tactics on conspiracies and neglected revolutionary work among the masses, evidently still afraid of mass ac-

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

² For details about the Indian emigration movement into Soviet Russia see: M. A. Persits, *India's Revolutionaries in Soviet Russia. The Mainsprings of the Indian Communist Movement*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 28-70 (in Russian).

tions of the working people and wishing to avoid them. Now they believed that India's liberation from the British colonialists chiefly depended on a liberation mission by the Soviet Red Army and not on armed support by German imperialists. It was most important that in the development of their political thinking the Indian national revolutionaries, under the influence of the October Revolution, began to connect the struggle against colonial oppression with the need to carry out democratic transformations designed to further the interests of the urban and rural working masses. Moreover their system of views now included the socialist idea. But its substance consisted of diverse pre-Marxist egalitarian concepts, populist-socialist interpretations of the communal institutions of pre-colonial India, and also included the firm belief that there was a similarity between the basic precepts of the Muslim religion and communism. The non-scientific nature of these concepts was obvious, but they did express the sincere desire of the Indian national revolutionaries to draw closer to the proponents of Marxism-Leninism. Dependent as it was on India's socio-economic development, the political awareness of these revolutionaries so far prevented them from distinguishing between utopian egalitarian ideas of petty-bourgeois, peasant socialism and scientific communism. Although they remained consistent anti-imperialists they were making only the first steps towards Marxism.

The third politically organised group of Indian national revolutionaries in Tashkent was the Indian Section of the Council for International Propaganda consisting mostly of émigrés who had parted company with the group of the Provisional Government, and some other revolutionaries. The Indian Section definitely evolved to the left. It began to assimilate and uphold the idea that India's freedom and independence could be won only in the course of an active struggle of the broad masses of the Indian people and not as a result of an invasion by the Red Army. As regards Soviet Russia, they expected it to furnish moral and material support to the fighting people. The Section was the first group of revolutionary émigrés to announce that propaganda should be conducted first and foremost among the working people and that its main element should be an

account of the new life in the Soviet Republic. Indian national revolutionaries warmly welcomed the October Socialist Revolution and some of them expressed their sincere desire to take part in defending Soviet power against the intervention of British imperialists.

In the latter half of the 1920s scores of unaffiliated Indian revolutionaries began to arrive in Tashkent. Usually they formed groups, but only in order to cope with the enormous difficulties of their trek through Afghanistan, the Himalayas and Hindu Kush and across Soviet territory where *basmach* bands operated and the Civil War was in progress. Most of the Indians who entered the Soviet territory belonged to the Muslim wing of the national revolutionary struggle, who joined the Hegira, a Caliphate movement calling for an exodus from India of all faithful Muslims as a protest against the partition of Turkey by the powers of the Entente and their taking prisoner the Turkish Sultan-Caliph. Essentially an anti-colonial liberation movement, the Caliphate exodus was a convenient means of emigration into the Soviet Republic. It was used by many Indians, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who wished to see for themselves how socialist ideas were translated into reality and to obtain the assistance of Soviet power so as to be able to continue to struggle for the liberation of their country.

Another part of them went to Turkey hoping to join forces with the Kemalists in waging an armed struggle against British imperialism. But these Indians first headed for Soviet Russia which alone could help them in their difficult journey to the Turkish border.

A fairly large number of Indian deserters from the British forces occupying the Middle East countries fled to Baku. At the end of 1920 there were approximately 200 or 250 Indian revolutionaries in Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand, Baku and some other towns.

If not for the Afghan Government that gave in to British pressure and in every way prevented the transit of Indians to the north, the number of Indian revolutionaries reaching Soviet Russia would have been much greater. On April 27, 1921 there was a report from Charjow that the Afghan authorities had arrested 500 Indians in Mazar who

were on their way to Russia and detained them in Khanabad. On top of that 150 Indian participants in the exodus on their way to Soviet Russia were arrested in Herat. The Soviet Consul tried to obtain their release but his efforts proved futile.¹

The Indians explained the purpose of their arrival in Soviet Russia in forms which they filled in in Tashkent. One of the questions was: "What is the purpose of your arrival in Russia?" Most of them (45) replied: "to serve the Indian revolution", "to work for the Indian revolution", "to work for the liberation of India", "to fight against Britain", "to serve India", "to serve my homeland", and so forth. Another group of 17 persons replied as follows: "to solicit assistance", "to obtain assistance from Russia", etc. Many émigrés clearly regarded Soviet power as a mighty factor which had revolutionised India's national liberation movement. Seven of them wrote down in the form that they had arrived in Soviet Russia, "in order to join the revolution", or "to conduct revolutionary activity" or, as the 20-year-old Shaukat Usmani replied, "to join the revolutionary movement". Five Indians disclosed an even more definite political aims, they wanted to "study the Bolsheviks", or "learn from the revolution" or, according to Abdas Subkhan, 50, "to draw a lesson from the Russian revolution" while, Sabdar Han, 42, explained that he wanted "to study the Russian revolution and define ways for the Indian revolution". Eight Indians wrote: "to study the art of war and propaganda work". One Indian said that he was a deserter from the British Army and another that he was returning home from Turkey. It follows that almost all Indian émigrés had a fairly high level of national awareness; they were inspired with the idea of liberating their country and believed that they would be able to carry out their patriotic plans best of all with the assistance of Soviet Russia.

Recalling the past Shaukat Usmani wrote: "It will not be an exaggeration to say that a considerable majority of the people who had crossed into Afghanistan (i.e., the emigrants from India—M. P.) had linked their hopes

¹ CPA IML.

with Soviet Russia much earlier than they left their homes."¹

Muhammed ibn Abduelah Ensari, an Indian who arrived with the Afghan Embassy in Moscow in October 1919, spoke about the need of an alliance between the countries of the East and Soviet Russia and that the oppressed peoples should carry into reality the ideas of Soviet Russia. He described his impressions of Soviet reality in an article under the eloquent title "The Russian Republic — the Guide for the East to Prosperity".²

Lenin had several meetings with Indian revolutionaries. In November 1918 he received the Muslim leaders brothers Jabbar and Sattar Kheiri, in May 1919 he received Maulvi Barkatullah and in July 1919 a delegation consisting of Mahendra Pratap, Maulvi Barkatullah, Abdur-Rabb-Barg, P. B. Acharya, Dalip Singh Gilla and Ibraghim, a peasant from Panjab. He corresponded with Indians in 1920 and 1921, too, discussing the ways to fight for India's liberation.³

In China the progressive intelligentsia began to display an interest in the situation in Soviet Russia as far back as 1919. To satisfy this interest trips were organised to Moscow which beginning with the mid-1920s became regular⁴ and provided Chinese public opinion with reliable information about Soviet power and the events in Russia. At the end of 1920 writer and revolutionary Chu Chiu-po who was a member of a Marxist circle in Peking arrived in Russia as correspondent of the *Chen Pao* newspaper. In January 1921 he visited Moscow to find out for himself what "the first socialist republic of the 20th century was like".⁵ Writing in the Comintern press he noted at the time: "Most of us are students ... who have come to Russia to study and thus, upon returning to China, to be in a position to help

¹ Shaukat Usmani, "Russian Revolution and India", *Mainstream*, August 1, 1967, p. 14.

² See: *Izvestia*, November 24, 1918, p. 2.

³ See: *The Life of Nationalities*, October 19, 1919; October 26, 1919 (in Russian).

⁴ See: Y. Kostin, "Two Interpretations of the October Revolution in China", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1967, No. 5, p. 70.

⁵ Chu Chiu-po, *Essays and Articles*, Moscow, 1959, p. 46 (in Russian).

the Chinese proletariat."¹ He admired the revolutionary achievements of the Russian workers and pointed out that Chinese working masses expected the Soviet people to help them organise a social and liberation movement. "The proletariat of China," he wrote, "depends only on you, brave Russian workers who are courageously fighting for the happiness of the whole of humanity.... The Chinese proletariat needs your help in order to take its place in the ranks of the fighters."² Two other correspondents of Chinese newspapers Yu Suan-hua of the Peking *Chen Pao* and Li Jung-u of the Shanghai *Shihshih hsinpao* arrived with Chu Chiu-po. In March 1921 Chang Tai-lei³ arrived in Irkutsk. For a long time he conducted communist propaganda among the Chinese and Korean population in the Russian Far East. Liu Shao-chi⁴ and many other Chinese revolutionaries also visited Soviet Russia.

Various societies and associations uniting citizens from the contiguous Eastern countries began to appear in Russia on the eve of and particularly after the Great October Socialist Revolution. Some of them were purely workers' organisations whose members wanted to study socialism and participate in the communist movement. There were also revolutionary-democratic and national-bourgeois societies. Unions of Chinese citizens began to appear in Russia at the beginning of 1917 and were transformed into unions of Chinese workers after the October Socialist Revolution. In December 1919 local unions of Chinese workers united into an All-Russia Revolutionary Organisation with a Central Committee in Moscow. The local branches of this union worked in close co-operation with the public organisations of Soviet citizens studying and drawing upon their revolutionary experience. This was precisely what the workers in China expected their compatriots in Russia to do. "When you return home," workers from Southern China wrote to

¹ *Bulletin of the Comintern Far Eastern Secretariat*, 1921, No. 1, p. 14 (in Russian).

² *Bulletin...*

³ See: B. Shumyatsky, "From the History of the Komsomol and the Communist Party of China", *The Revolutionary East*, 1928, Nos. 4-5, p. 204 (in Russian); CPA IML.

⁴ See: Liu Shao-chi, "Speech at a Meeting of Muscovites at the Sports Palace", December 7, 1960, *Pravda*, December 8, 1960.

Russia, "and begin sowing the seeds of the Russian revolution here, among your brothers, this will raise them for the joint struggle and create a new socialist China."¹

Soviet Communists searched in earnest for the best forms of working with the population of the Eastern countries. A Union for the Liberation of the Peoples of the East which embraced a part of the revolutionaries from many Eastern countries was set up in Moscow in October 1918.² Then the Tashkent Union was formed and its branches appeared in many parts of Turkestan.³ Judging by its programme, the Union worked for the unification of the national liberation movement in various Asian countries into a single anti-imperialist front. Only the working people were regarded as the real force of national liberation in the East. It was proclaimed that the princes and proprietors were not interested in destroying Western imperialism.⁴ A Union of Persian Citizens,⁵ a bourgeois organisation, was founded in Tashkent in May 1919. Of a similar nature was the voluntary society for assistance to Persian citizens which evidently was established the same year in Moscow with a branch in Turkestan. In the period from 1918 to 1920 various Korean national revolutionary organisations operated in many Far Eastern towns.

In one way or another all these numerous unions, societies and associations uniting various social groups of citizens of Eastern countries living in Russia, were already involved or were preparing to play a part in the liberation of their respective countries. They regarded the Soviet Republic as a crucial moral and political force which could offer them effective help and support. Soviet Russia was turning into a school of the liberation struggle for the revolutionaries of the East. Here they learned to comprehend the role of

¹ See: V. M. Ustinov, "Chinese Communist Organisations in Soviet Russia (1918-1920)", *Chinese Volunteers in Battles for Soviet Power*, Moscow, 1961, p. 47 (in Russian).

² See: K. Troyanovsky, *The East and the Revolution*, Moscow, 1918, p. 65 (in Russian).

³ See: V. G. Razina, "Iranian Revolutionaries in Turkestan", *Materials on the East*, Tashkent, 1966, p. 65.

⁴ See: K. Troyanovsky, *Op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

⁵ See: V. G. Razina, *Op. cit.*, p. 21; also CPA IML, s. 122, r. 11, f. 29, p. 8.

the working class as the key force of the movement for national independence, and came to realise that this movement could not achieve its goal without a close alliance with the victorious proletariat of Russia and the world working-class movement.

THE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY OF THE RCP(B) AMONG THE POPULATION OF THE CONTIGUOUS COUNTRIES OF THE EAST

The situation which took shape in Soviet Russia compelled the Bolsheviks to conduct extensive propaganda, organisational and theoretical work among the masses of working people from nearby Eastern countries. This was done in line with the interests of the young workers' and peasants' state and was the duty of the revolutionaries dedicated to the principles of proletarian internationalism. The Bolsheviks in every way helped to spread the ideas of socialism and the liberation of the oppressed nations among the working people from neighbouring Asian countries who were living in Soviet Russia, and helped to assemble the vanguard revolutionary forces of the East and unite them into communist organisations. The Bolsheviks strove to revolutionise the peoples of the East not only in fulfilment of their direct duty as proletarian internationalists; their efforts were also an inevitable response to the armed operations of the imperialists who used the Eastern border-line countries as bridgeheads for anti-Soviet intervention. The Communist Party countered imperialist conspiracies, provocations and direct aggression with armed defence of the Soviet Republic and political education among the citizens of the Eastern countries. Already in the pre-Comintern period Soviet Communists launched extensive internationalist work among foreign citizens—Turkish POWs, Iranian migrant workers, Chinese and Korean unskilled workers and Indian national revolutionaries. In his report to the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B) Lenin said that agitation and propaganda carried on by the Party's Central Committee among foreigners living in Russia played an important part in the formation of many national Com-

munist parties and the Communist International itself.¹

In May 1918 a Federation of Foreign Communists under the Central Committee of the RCP(B) was set up in Moscow. It united numerous communist groups of former POWs from Western and Eastern European countries. As regards the communist movement of the working people from nearby Eastern countries, it was chiefly guided by the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, initially called the Central Bureau of Muslim Organisations of the RCP(B). The Bureau was set up in December 1918. Actually, however, its leading group had emerged in January 1918 and immediately began extensive propaganda work among foreigners from Asian countries.

The Central Bureau functioned under the direct guidance of the RCP(B) Central Committee. In 1918 and in early 1919 it was headed by J. V. Stalin and later by M. Sultan-Galiev.² It is possible to judge the scale of political education and cultural work carried out by the Central Bureau by the fact that its Department of International Propaganda had ten sections, including Arab, Persian, Turkish, Chinese, and Bukhara.³ In ten months, beginning with January 1918, the Central Bureau's leading group put out more than 400,000 copies of newspapers, brochures and leaflets in the Turkish, Tatar and Kirghiz languages, and from December 1918 to March 1919 over 200,000 copies of its publications came out in Moscow alone in these three languages.⁴

Political work among the working people of the neighbouring Eastern countries was conducted not only by the central organisations especially set up for this purpose. In regions where a particularly large number of citizens from

¹ See: V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the RCP(B), March 18-23, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 159-61.

² M. Sultan-Galiev held a high post in the People's Commissariat for Nationalities in the period from 1918 to 1922. In July 1919 he was also appointed Deputy Chairman and then Chairman of the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East. For a period of time he also headed the Central Muslim Military Commission. In May 1923 he was expelled from the RCP(B) for nationalistic, anti-Soviet and anti-Party activity.

³ See: *Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, Verbatim Report, Moscow, 1919, pp. 384-85 (in Russian).

⁴ See: *The Life of Nationalities*, March 9, 1919, p. 11 (in Russian).

neighbouring Asian countries were living, this work was performed by regional and district Party organisations as well as by territorial bureaus of the RCP(B) Central Committee.

An important resolution was adopted by the Second Siberian Conference of the RCP(B) which met illegally in late March 1919 while Kolchak was in control of that part of the country. The resolution said that the Conference considered it "most important to provide the proletariat of America, Japan, China and other Far Eastern countries with correct and timely information about the revolutionary struggle in Soviet Russia and Siberia and also about the role played by the Russian and the international bourgeoisie in suppressing the revolution." The Conference agreed to organise an information and agitation bureau under the Siberian Regional Committee in the Far East, and authorised it to contact the Communists of the East and America, organise an exchange of information with them, and also conduct all kinds of agitation.¹ Soviet Communists acted in the belief that it was necessary to expand and strengthen Soviet Russia's international links with the working people in foreign countries to the maximum for the sake of the joint struggle against imperialism, for the sake of consolidating the world's first workers' and peasants' state and liberating the peoples of the East from the colonial yoke.

Communists in Siberia and the Far East did much to improve the work of Party bodies among the working people of the Eastern countries. On June 18, 1919 an official of the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee F. Gapon in a special memorandum recommended the establishment under the Siberian Regional Committee of the RCP(B) of an Eastern Bureau which would include representatives of all the peoples of the Far East — Buryats, Mongolians, Chinese, Koreans and Japanese. This would enable the Bureau immediately to launch effective and large-scale work and fulfil successfully its main task, in revolutionising the East, he wrote. He also recommended the establishment of close organisational links with revolutionary groupings in China, Korea, Japan and Mongolia with

¹ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 6, f. 297, p. 28.

the view to influencing them politically and setting up communist organisations. Taking into account that there was a shortage of workers with a good knowledge of Marxism, Gapon proposed that the Party and the Soviets should open schools in Siberia for training personnel from among the Eastern peoples. According to his project the Eastern Bureau would have a general, an organisational and instructional, agitational and publishing, and communications and information departments.¹ Though this project was not fully implemented, its practicable propositions were used in the organisation of the Section of the Eastern Peoples under the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee in Irkutsk in July and August 1920.² Subsequently, in January 1921, the Comintern used the Section's staff in setting up its Far Eastern Secretariat in Irkutsk.³ A great deal of work among Koreans and Chinese was conducted by the Communists of the Far Eastern Republic. The Republic's top Party body, the Far Eastern Bureau of the RCP(B), established special Korean sections of agitation and propaganda under the *gubernia* and *uyezd* Party committees in areas with a considerable Korean population.⁴ Chinese sections were organised in regions with a large Chinese population. In addition to its departments the Far Eastern Bureau also had the Organisational Bureau of Chinese Communists and the Korean Bureau, each consisting of five members.⁵ In the European part of the country, the political education of the Turkish and Iranian working people was actively conducted by the Odessa Gubernia Party Committee.

Similar work was carried on in Turkestan primarily among the Iranians, Turks, Indians, Afghans and also Chinese and Uighurs. At first the Turkestan Commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee formed an agitation and propaganda sub-division for this purpose. But shortly afterwards, on December 23, 1919, it decided to form a Council for International Propaganda under its guid-

¹ *Ibid.*, s. 372, r. 1, f. 322, pp. 3-4.

² *The Peoples of the Far East*, No. 2, p. 176 (in Russian).

³ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 65, f. 322, p. 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, s. 372, r. 1, f. 1094, p. 36.

⁵ *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 13, f. 291, p. 31.

ance. On February 6, 1920 the leader of the Turkish Communists Mustafa Subhi was elected Council Chairman and held this post until the middle of May. The Council's central political body was its Political Department which guided the revolutionary activity of its Persian, Turkish, Bukhara, Khiva and Chinese sections and also the Indian section which was formed later, in April 1920.¹

In a report on its activity covering the period from December 1919 to July 1920, the Council defined its tasks as follows: "To establish links which would connect the revolution in Russia with the movement of the oppressed masses of the East; to make the slogans proclaimed by the proletariat of Russia accessible and comprehensive to the working masses of Persia, India, Bukhara, etc."² The Council was an international organisation and its plenum consisted of three representatives from the Party's Territorial Committee, two from the Iranian Communist Party Adalat, one each from other national Party groups and five representatives from the Turkestan Commission of the RCP(B) Central Committee.

The Council carried on effective propaganda among the citizens of the neighbouring Eastern countries living in Turkestan. In its educational activity it widely resorted to meetings, talks and lectures as well as issuing various printed matter.

Within a short period, from December 1919 to July 1920, the Council succeeded in organising the publication of political literature in Persian, Turkish, Uzbek, Urdu and English. It would be interesting to recall some of the brochures which it put out and the number of copies of each edition.

1. *The Novy Mir* newspaper, two issues; 75,000 copies each; in Turkish.

2. *The Ten Commandments of Persian Workers and Peasants*, in Azerbaijanian; 3,000 copies.

¹ The Council for International Propaganda consisted of three main departments: political, organisational, and for agitational literature. In between its plenary meetings the Council conducted its work wholly under the guidance of the Executive Bureau.—CPA IML, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, pp. 262, 263; s. 544, r. 1, f. 1, p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 261.

3. *The Appeal of the Young Bukhara Party in Uzbek*; 5,000 copies.

4. *The Rules and Programme of the Young Bukhara Party*; 10,000 copies.

5. *Address to the Oppressed Peoples of the East*, in Persian, Turkish and Arabic.

6. *Appeal of the Youth League of the East*, in Persian, Uzbek and English.

7. *Appeal of the Persian Adalat Party*, in Uzbek and Persian.

8. *Manifesto of the Communist International*, in English.

9. *Address to the Peoples of India*, in English and Urdu; 5,000 copies.

10. *The World Revolution and the Liberation of the Peoples of the East*, in Russian.

11. *Appeal of the Youth Union*, in Uzbek.

12. *How the British Oppress in Their Own Possessions*.

13. *Appeal to All the Oppressed Peoples of the East*, in Arabic.¹

The Council trained politically aware and adept agitators and organisers for the Eastern countries, but it coped only partially with this difficult task. Nevertheless, hundreds of trained agitators returned to their own countries where they propagated the truth about the Soviet Republic and its socialist ideals. The organs of Soviet power helped the Council in this work, in spite of the difficulties created by the Civil War and economic dislocation, and helped in arranging a steady, albeit slow, evacuation of Chinese, Turkish and Iranian citizens wishing to return home.

In a letter to the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, Mustafa Subhi said: "We have already sent hundreds of comrades for responsible Party work to all countries, but they have to be sent in thousands, not in hundreds.... We urgently request you to dispatch to Tashkent and place at the disposal of the Council for International Propaganda ... all those who know the languages of the contiguous countries, all those who want to work in their native countries, all those who are prepared to sacrifice themselves for the sake of liberating the op-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

pressed peoples.”¹ The home-coming of former POWs, migrant workers and emigrants who had passed through an elementary school of class struggle in Soviet Russia played an important part in revolutionising the oppressed peoples of the East. That was why ruling circles in Iran, Turkey and China and also the imperialist colonialists feared these people and took various measures to prevent them from influencing the population.

Important as it was this process of the revolutionisation and proletarianisation of the working people of the East should not be overestimated. Frequently Chinese or Iranian migrant workers lost their proletarian class awareness upon returning home from Russia. They once again turned into downtrodden peasants or artisans, loaders or boatmen eking out a half-hungry, isolated existence and possessing an individualistic psychology. The way of thinking and acting which they had acquired in a foreign country under different social conditions was to a considerable degree eroded.

As they developed political education among the working people of the Eastern countries living in Russia, Soviet Communists helped revolutionary-minded Turks, Iranians, Koreans, Chinese and Indians to unite into national communist groups. Thus they contributed to the formation of Communist Parties in nearby Eastern countries where the first elements of the communist movement were beginning to appear. In his above memorandum on the organisation of an Eastern Bureau under the Siberian Regional Party Committee F. Gapon envisaged assistance to the revolutionaries of Korea, China and Japan in the formation and unification of Party groups. The Council for International Propaganda noted as it formulated its tasks that it was “necessary to start setting up communist organisations of the working people of different nationalities”.² And the Siberian Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee at its meeting on October 12, 1920 where a report on the work of the sections of Eastern peoples was delivered, said that attention had to be paid to the formation of communist organisations in China and Korea.³

¹ *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 2, f. 131, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, p. 261.

³ *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 12, f. 499, p. 7.

THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AMONG THE CITIZENS OF THE EASTERN COUNTRIES IN RUSSIA

Under the influence of the October Socialist Revolution and the building of a workers' and peasants' state free of class and national oppression, a communist movement took shape and began to develop among the citizens of Eastern countries living in Russia. Communist groups were formed and preparations for the organisation of Communist parties were started. The October Revolution tremendously accelerated social development in the countries of the East. Representative of the Communist Party of Indonesia Maring said at the time that Russia's links with the East rendered a great service to communism in terms of its influence on the Asian peoples.¹

Of course, the development of the communist movement among the citizens of the Eastern countries in Russia was not a result of the influence of the October Revolution alone, but also a result of the concrete activity of the Soviet state and the Bolshevik Party.

Revolutionary-minded Turkish POWs were among the first to respond to the propaganda of the Bolsheviks and begin the organisation of a Communist party. Russian Marxists had conducted extensive work among the POWs already before the October Revolution, the concentration of large masses of working people facilitated propaganda and agitation among them. Quite naturally, the Turks were also influenced by the powerful internationalist movement which embraced the proletarian, frequently Social-Democratic, elements among the POWs from the armies of the European countries. Subjective causes also played their part. The prominent revolutionary Mustafa Subhi, who became a Communist in Soviet Russia, and with him other revolutionary Turkish intellectuals worked among the Turkish POWs. Subhi specially noted the presence of intellectual forces in the communist movement of the Turkish internationalists in Russia.² The most important thing, however, was that

¹ See: *Reports at the Third Congress of the Comintern, 1921*, p. 281-82 (in Russian).

² See: M. Subhi's speech at the Moscow Conference of Turkish Socialists-Communists. CPA IML, s. 17, r. 4, f. 109, p. 6.

a working class and a working-class movement had already appeared in Turkey, and this naturally found its reflection in the class composition of the POWs and their sentiments.

On June 17, 1918, Mustafa Subhi with the help of local Soviet and Party bodies organised in Kazan a conference of Turkish internationalist socialists from among the former POWs. Just over a month later, on July 22-25 a more representative conference with a broader programme was held in Moscow. It was attended by 20 delegates from many groups of Turkish socialists in Russia based in the Moscow, Orel, Ivanovo, Rybinsk, Kostroma, Yuriev, Kazan, Astrakhan, Ufa, Ryazan and Ural gubernias.¹ The participants in the Kazan and Moscow conferences displayed a clear understanding of the fact that the consolidation of Soviet power and participation on its side in the Civil War was the duty of every internationalist who wanted to liberate his own country from imperialism.

The Moscow Conference resolutely protested against the armed anti-Soviet intervention in the Transcaucasus launched at the time by the Sultan's government. It also adopted a resolution which read in part: "Inasmuch as international detachments are being formed in Russia to defend Soviet power... and support the world revolution, the Conference has decided to reinforce them with its own Turkish socialist detachment."² This resolution did not remain on paper. Turkish revolutionaries fought at Kazan, took part in quelling the counter-revolutionary mutiny of the Czechoslovak forces (former POWs) in Russia,³ and in battles on the Turkestan, Crimean and other fronts. "At present," said Mustafa Subhi in March 1919, "thousands of Turkish Red Armymen fighting for Soviet power are in action on differ-

¹ More information about Mustafa Subhi and the Kazan and Moscow conferences is to be found in: "Unknown Document of M. Subhi Concerning the Operations of the 12th Army, September 28, 1919" (including an interesting biographical note), *Historical Archive*, 1962, No. 4, p. 222; E. Ludshuveit, "Conference of Left-Wing Turkish Socialists...", pp. 174-92; *Life Devoted to Struggle*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 491-502; M. A. Persits, "Turkish Internationalists in Soviet Russia", *The Peoples of Asia and Africa*, 1967, No. 5, pp. 59-67 (all in Russian).

² CPA IML, s. 17, r. 4, f. 109, p. 12.

³ *Ibid.*, f. 121, p. 16; s. 17, r. 2, f. 1, p. 310.

ent fronts in Russia."¹ The Conference elected a leading group of Turkish Socialists-Communists consisting of Mustafa Subhi, Djevdet Ali, Asim Nedjati, Nihat Murset and Ibrahim Ahmed.² They called themselves the Central Committee of the Turkish Party of Socialists-Communists.³ A committee for agitation and propaganda was also elected. Both groups were to prepare a representative congress (with most of the delegates coming from Turkey) which could form a Turkish Marxist-Leninist party and draw up its programme. "Our goal," said Mustafa Subhi, "is to form a socialist party of Turkish workers and poor peasants in order to be able to withstand the onslaught of capitalism".⁴

The Kazan and Moscow conferences of Turkish socialists inaugurated the unification of Turkish socialists in Russia and created the leading nucleus of the Turkish communist movement. This alone was a very considerable contribution to the formation of a national Communist party a year and a half later. These conferences are very interesting from another point of view. Their decisions about the programme, the nature of the imminent revolution in Turkey and the Party's tactics in this revolution vividly characterised the level of the theoretical views not only of the Turkish, but also of other Communists of the East and even of many Communists in Soviet Russia concerned with the problems of the liberation movement in the colonies and dependencies. A very timid attempt was made at the Kazan Conference to bring to light the distinctive features of semi-colonial society and the specific nature of the proletarian movement in the East. "European capitalism," it was stated in the resolution, "and the developed colonial policy direct their steps to the East in order to subject the people there to plunder and violence. In view of this and also owing to the unpreparedness of the masses in the East, the proletarian movement should be guided in a specific direction and along a definite channel (my italics—M. P.). This direction must be defined by the socialist organisation of workers

¹ *The First Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1933, p. 244 (in Russian).

² CPA IML, s. 17, r. 4, f. 109, p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, f. 121, p. 18.

⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 109, p. 3.

and peasants which would see to it that the interests of its classes are observed."¹ The resolution went no further than to point out that the socialist party had to take account of the conditions in the Eastern countries to define the objectives of the proletarian movement. The rather low theoretical level at which the peculiarities of the proletarian movement in the oppressed Eastern countries were examined was by no means heightened in the decisions adopted by the Moscow Conference a month later.

The first Turkish Communists at the Moscow Conference proceeded from the assumption that Turkey was a purely capitalist country and that therefore a socialist revolution was imminent there. "Here, comrades," declared Mustafa Subhi, "are our convictions and our programme: to destroy capital and liberate the people. All land, all the means of production and transport, in a word, all the existing wealth must be nationalised by the people and thus the poor classes of society will be liberated from bourgeois tyranny. This is the basis of socialism."² The Conference declared that it was "in agreement and solidarity with the programme of the Communists" but postponed a detailed formulation of a corresponding document until the next conference scheduled to take place in November 1918.³ In view of the weakness of the proletarian movement in Turkey a resolution passed on Nazmi's report "Turkey's Political Situation and the Eastern Question" stated that only the socialist system could save Turkey and that it "could be established only following a world revolution which would overthrow imperialist governments and the bourgeoisie."⁴

This did not mean, however, that Turkish Communists intended to postpone the revolution in their country indefinitely. They believed that a victorious proletarian revolution in major European countries was a question of the immediate future. Then, in mid-1918, Communists of the colonies and dependencies had not yet advanced the thesis that the East had to ensure the victory of the revolution in the West. They would do this later.

¹ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 4, f. 109, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13. The conference did not take place in November.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

The decisions on tactical issues adopted at the Moscow Conference were predetermined by the weak theoretical grounding of the first Turkish Communists and also by their impatience. At the time the feeling that the revolution would be easy to accomplish and that the world revolution was round the corner were running high among all the foreign participants in the Russian revolution. Having underestimated the national liberation character of the revolutionary movement in Turkey, the conference, naturally, rejected the possibility of a temporary agreement between the proletariat and the national bourgeoisie to strengthen the anti-imperialist struggle. The Turkish Socialist Party, said Mustafa Subhi, "ought to sever its links with capital and enter into no agreement with it."¹

We have absolutely no intention to reprehend Subhi and his comrades for adopting this stand. It was determined not only by theoretical weakness but also by the whole situation of bitter class battles which almost everywhere, and not only in Russia, acquired the character of armed struggle. Under such conditions one could have hardly expected the first Turkish Communists to come forward with another course of action. On the other hand it should not be overlooked that very sober views were voiced at the conference concerning one very important question for the Muslim East. Agitator Shefket who told the Conference how he carried on his explanatory work among the former POWs also outlined his views concerning socialist propaganda among the religious who constituted a vast majority of the Turkish workers. He said that agitators had to take the latter's feeling into consideration, for "they have the highest respect for religion" and added that "no one's religious feelings should be tampered with, for they had fought against this sort of thing in the past and are prepared to fight with no less determination against us if we attempt to tamper with these feelings".²

The first Turkish Communists endeavoured to analyse the situation in the East more closely and formulate their tactics accordingly.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

After the Moscow Conference Turkish Communist agitators went to different towns in Soviet Russia where there were compact groups of Turkish POWs and other categories of the Turkish population. At the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919, the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, in response to a request from the Central Committee of the Turkish Socialists-Communists, sent Gemal Nedjati to the Crimea, Hafiz Ali to Kazan, Hasan Ali to Ryazan and Djevdet Ali to Samara and Saratov.¹ In 1919 and 1920 the Tashkent Council for International Propaganda sent a group of five Turkish Communists to conduct agitation in Turkish POWs camps in Siberia. Communist organisations were formed and everywhere communist detachments were raised to fight in the Civil War. Propaganda literature in fairly large editions was published in Moscow and elsewhere.² The activity carried on by Asim Nedjati in Astrakhan produced a noteworthy result. With the help of prominent Caucasian Communists he even managed to organise The First Congress of Civilians and POWs to form a Communist Branch which was held on January 7 and 8, 1919. The 25 delegates of the Congress heard several reports, including a report on the influence of the October Revolution on the proletariat of the East by Nariman Narimanov, on the Red Army by Buniyat-Zade, on the programme and tactics of the RCP(B) by Amirov, on the economic and political situation of the Turkish proletariat by Mamed D-Jamat, on the past and present of the Turkish proletariat by Mamed Harun, and on the influence of the First World War on the Turkish proletariat by Asim Nedjati.³ In his speech Nariman Narimanov proceeded from the concept of an impending socialist revolution in Turkey, proclaimed by the Moscow Conference of Turkish Socialists-Communists. The minutes specify: "Narimanov shows that a socialist revolution is the only salvation for the proletariat of all the belligerent countries. Addressing himself to the Turkish comrades he said: 'If you want to save the unfortunate Turkish proletariat from destruction or imminent slavery, organise and kindle the fire of a socialist revolution in Turkey.'" ⁴ Another speaker, Amirov, also indicated that the "sole level of salvation" for the Turkish proletariat was the "speediest overthrow... of landlord rule" and abolition of the domination of the class of exploiters.²

¹ *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 2, f. 12, pp. 1, 13; f. 154, pp. 8, 11.

² *Ibid.*, r. 4, f. 109, p. 22.

³ *Ibid.*, r. 2, f. 12, p. 130.

Meetings of Turkish revolutionaries were also held in Moscow, Saratov³ and a number of other cities. They resulted in the formation of communist organisations and volunteer detachments. The participants in all these meetings were profoundly aware of the need for an alliance with Soviet Russia as a guarantee of the success of the revolution in Turkey. In his speech at the Astrakhan Congress Mamed Riza said: "If we intend to liberate the Turkish proletariat from talons of the voracious European imperialism we must link our destiny more closely with the revolutionary proletariat of the Soviet Republic of Russia."⁴ Subhi and his group managed to establish a direct link with the revolutionary movement in Turkey itself. Turkish Communists began to return home via Odessa,⁵ and communist organisations sprang up in Turkey to the anxiety and irritation of the government.

The Iranian workers in Soviet Russia also began to join the communist movement. Much was done towards this end by Adalat, a Social-Democratic organisation set up in Baku back in 1916 by immigrants from Iranian Azerbaijan. In 1918 and 1919 Iranian Communist groups were formed in Astrakhan and Moscow.⁶ But the Adalat Party became particularly active in the formation of Iranian communist groups in Turkestan with the entry of the Red Army into the region in the autumn of 1919 and the establishment in December of the same year of the Council for International Propaganda.

The leaders of Adalat's Turkestan branch made a tour of towns and villages of the area to organise local branches among Persian workers.⁷ By the middle of 1920 Party com-

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 131.

³ *Ibid.*, f. 154, pp. 6, 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 134, p. 3; *The Life of Nationalities*, June 29, 1920.

⁶ CPA IML, s. 17 r. 2, f. 42, pp. 22, 53, 64.

⁷ *Ibid.*, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, p. 8.

mittees were set up in 52 localities in Turkestan.¹ Adalat's total membership in Turkestan was almost six thousand by April 1920. The Party put out its own publications, and Persian language newspapers were published in Samarkand and Poltoratsk (Ashkhabad).² As everywhere else, the growth of the communist movement was accompanied by an accelerated formation of national Red Army battalions. This was a clear indication that the revolutionary elements in the East were becoming increasingly aware of the decisive role played by Soviet Russia in determining the outcome of the liberation struggle of the Asian countries. In 1918 and 1919 Iranian volunteers were already fighting together with the Red Army against the British interventionists on the Transcaspian front.³ And when recruitment into the Persian Red Army was announced in March and April 1920 so many people volunteered that their registration was cut short, for, as Sultan Zade, an organiser of Adalat in Turkestan, said "it was technically impossible for us to supply all the volunteers with everything necessary".⁴

Adalat had organisations also in Azerbaijan and Daghestan.⁵ Iranian Communists maintained regular contacts with the revolutionary movement in Iran proper, and as a result of their efforts Iranian communist groups were set up in Zenjan, Resht, Ardebil and elsewhere. According to data supplied by Sultan Zade and which seem to be considerably exaggerated, Adalat had 10,000 members in Iran by the middle of 1920⁶, and party organisations were being set up throughout the country.⁷

¹ See: *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 14, p. 2889. According to other sources this party had 35 organisations by the middle of 1920 in Turkestan.—CPA IML, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, p. 264.

² *Ibid.*

³ See: A. M. Matveyev, "Iranian Migrant Workers in Turkestan After the Victory of the Great October Revolution", *Soviet Oriental Studies*, 1958, No. 5, p. 123 (in Russian).

⁴ Sultan Zade, "The Iranian Communist Party", *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 13, pp. 2551-2552.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, see also: V. G. Razina, *Iranian Revolutionaries...*, p. 69.

⁷ *Herald of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, No. 7, August 8, 1920, p. 1 (in Russian).

The views of the first Iranian Communists were also extremely leftist because they were fostered by a burning desire to emulate the Russian experience of socialist revolution in their native Iran, and were not based on a precise account of the historically concrete socio-economic situation in that country. In his theses on the prospects for a socialist revolution in the East, which were first published in March 1920, the leader of the Iranian Communists Sultan Zade sought to prove that the conditions in tsarist Russia prior to the revolution in 1917 and conditions in Iran at the beginning of the 1920s were almost identical so that already at the time Iran could accomplish a socialist revolution. He wrote that all large-scale industry in Russia belonged to foreign capital, "therefore the entire surplus value was pumped out of the country. It was these conditions that fostered revolutionary sentiments among the working class. In this respect, Persia's situation is no different from Russia's."¹ And since Persia was allegedly "one of those Eastern countries which have an extremely steeled working class it ought to be and will be the first country in the East to hoist the red banner of the social revolution on the ruins of the Shah's throne".² At the First Congress of the Iranian Communist Party which took place in Enzeli on July 22-25, 1920, Sultan Zade delivered a report on the current situation in which he produced arguments in support of the above theses, and declared in particular: "The Congress must say that the revolution in Persia should take place under the sign of the social revolution".³ Representatives of the RCP(B) at the Congress, V. Naneishvili and Obukh⁴, for instance, opposed the adventurist course of accomplishing a socialist revolution and supported the idea of forming a united anti-imperialist and anti-Shah front of Communists and the national revolutionary forces in the Gilan revolution which was gaining momentum at

¹ *Izvestia* (Tashkent), March 25, 1920; October Revolution Central State Archive (ORCSA), Moscow, s. 5402, r. 1, f. 156, p. 45.

² *Izvestia* (Tashkent), March 31, 1920; *Kommunist* (Baku) June 5, 1920.

³ ORCSA, s. 5402, r. 1, f. 156, p. 40.

⁴ Real name Abukov, a representative of the Soviet military units in Iran.

the time. Thus they upheld Lenin's position which he expounded to the Second Congress of the Comintern in the *Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions*.

"We (Communists — *M. P.*) have never been against the national liberation movement and we support it," Naneishvili declared. Referring to Lenin, he said that "above all the Communists have to take advantage... of the national movement. When this is done the class differentiation will become apparent and the moment will arrive when it will be necessary to advance revolutionary social slogans." Some of the speakers criticised the Communists for shortcomings in their practical activity in Iran as a result of which the Iranian national bourgeoisie began to dissociate itself from the anti-British and anti-imperialist movement in the country.

The leftists tried to make the Soviets that were set up in the regions of the national liberation revolution, undertake socialist tasks at a time when these Soviets, the majority of which were peasant, had to fight only for the achievement of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal aims. Obukh said: "We have to rectify this error and try to convince the vacillating forces that Soviet rule (in Iran—*M. P.*) threatens neither the landlords nor the bourgeoisie, and then they will support the national liberation movement.... There is only one slogan at present — Down with the British, Down with the Shah's government!"

Nevertheless, the Congress gave in to pressure from the leftists and adopted a dual stand. The resolution on Sultan Zade's report said that it was the "duty of the Iranian Communist Party to fight against world imperialism together with Soviet Russia and to support all the forces in Persia which would oppose the British and the Shah's government".

At the same time, contrary to this correct premise, it mentioned the allegedly existing need "to paralyse those elements" which were "interested in chasing the British out of Persia" but were "afraid of revolutionary struggle". The Congress approved the party programme which proclaimed the "left" course towards an immediate socialist revolution, and consequently towards a split of the united

anti-imperialist front which was already beginning to take shape in Gilan.¹

There were also Chinese among the active participants in the communist movement which embraced thousands of foreign workers in revolutionary Russia. It was in Soviet Russia that the first Chinese Communists, members of the RCP(B), and the first Chinese communist groups appeared. Taking into account the very close ties between Chinese Communists in Russia and revolutionaries in China this circumstance clearly played a very great role in the rise of the communist movement in China. When a united Revolutionary Alliance of Chinese Workers was formed in Petrograd at the end of 1918, a communist organisation was also established in it. Shortly, with the help of RCP(B) organs, communist organisations were formed at the local branches of the Union of Chinese Workers. Towards the end of 1920 the Union had its branches in 12 towns of the Republic, mainly in the Far East, Siberia and Central Asia. Communist organisations were set up in military units where there were Chinese and Korean servicemen. In August 1920, there were 30 members and 129 candidate members of the RCP(B)² in the International Korean-Chinese Regiment, 3rd Siberian Infantry Division. Evidently there were also territorial associations of Chinese Communists. For instance, a Chinese communist group calling itself the Chinese Communist Party of the Amur Region functioned in Blagoveshensk.³ The Irkutsk Union of Chinese Workers stipulated in its Immediate Action Programme: "The main and immediate goal of the work among the masses carried on by members of the Union, is to create a solid nucleus of Chinese Communists, the future vanguard of the Chinese revolution, for which purpose it is necessary to establish a communist organisation."⁴

The growth in the number of Chinese Communists in the

¹ ORSCA, s. 5402, r. 1, f. 156, pp. 45, 46; *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 14, pp. 2891, 2892.

² CPA IML.

³ See: M. A. Persits, "Revolutionary Chinese Organisations on the Territory of the Far Eastern Republic and Sun Yat-sen", *Sun Yat-sen, 1866-1966, on the Occasion of the Centenary of his Birth*, Moscow, 1966 (in Russian).

⁴ CPA IML.

RCP(B) and the specific nature and complexity of the work among them made it necessary to set up a special centre. On July 1, 1920, a Central Organisational Bureau (COB)¹ of Chinese Communists was set up under the Central Committee of the RCP(B) and placed in charge of all the ideological, educational and organisational work among them. The Soviet Government and the Party made certain that the Chinese Communists had all the conditions which could be ensured at the time to put out printed matter and conduct propaganda. The numerous protests of the Peking authorities against the existence of Chinese communist groups in Soviet Russia were an indication of the effectiveness of their activity and of their revolutionary influence on their countrymen in China. Chinese consuls in Blagoveshchensk, Khabarovsk and other towns insisted that the "Chinese Communist Party", as they called the Chinese communist groups, be disbanded, and the US and British governments tried hard to prevent revolutionary-minded Chinese from returning to China from Soviet Russia.² There is no doubt that one of reasons which enabled the Chinese working class to create its own Communist Party ten years after the bourgeois revolution of 1911 was that the development of the working-class movement in the country was tremendously accelerated by the October Revolution and the assistance of the Bolsheviks. Most certainly an important factor of the development of the communist movement in China and the establishment of the Communist Party was the participation in these processes of hundreds of Chinese worker-Communists who had returned from Russia. As it happens not only Chinese but also some Soviet historians who study the history of the CPC pay too little attention to this circumstance in their accounts of the initial phase

¹ See: V. M. Ustinov, *Chinese Communist Organisations...*, pp. 42, 45 (in Russian). By decision of the RCP(B) Central Committee of September 2, 1920, the Central Organisational Bureau was transferred to the Far East where the bulk of Russia's Chinese population resided. Evidently henceforth COB became the Organisational Bureau of the Chinese Communists under the Far Eastern Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee.

² See: Y. K. Kostin, *Two Interpretations of the October Revolution in China*, p. 77; M. A. Persits, *The Far Eastern Republic and China*, pp. 188-89, 202 (both in Russian).

of the communist movement in China. While never failing to mention that apart from China the first Chinese communist groups appeared also in Japan and France, they overlook the formation and the active work of Chinese communist organisations in Soviet Russia. It is true of course that original sources available for examining this question are very scanty, but there are enough of them to draw the above conclusion.

The first Chinese Communists in Russia were also weakly grounded in Marxism-Leninism and adhered to leftist views concerning the tactics of the national liberation movement. The Central Organisational Bureau, for example, wrote in an appeal to the Chinese Communists in Turkestan in July or August 1920: "The foreign bourgeoisie — the Entente — is sucking the blood of our fathers, brothers, and sons and ingurgitating our country's wealth.... And our leaders condone the plunder of the fatherland. Comrades, we have to unite our forces... rise arms in hand against all bourgeois... ours and others [there is no difference—*M. P.*] and drive them out of our beloved fatherland."¹ The Organisational Bureau of the Chinese Communists under the Far Eastern Bureau of the CC RCP(B) formulated its tasks in terms that were even more definite. The Constitution of the Organisational Bureau said in part: "The Chinese Communists consider it their direct duty to the proletarians of all countries to accomplish a social revolution in China and organise the working class of China." No less significant in this respect was the *Manifesto on the Occasion of the Third Anniversary of the Russian Social Revolution* published in behalf of the so-called Chinese Communist Party of the Amur Region.² This very interesting document summons the Chinese people to accomplish a social revolution, because "in order to do away with economic inequality and implement the principles of justice socialism is necessary. Com-

¹ See: I. S. Sologubov, *Foreign Communists in Turkestan*, pp. 94-95. The appeal could have been written in 1920, between July 1 (the day of the formation of the Central Organisational Bureau) and September 2 (the date of the decision to transfer it to the Far East), because the Bureau calls itself the Moscow Organisational Bureau in the text.

² See: M. A. Persits, *Revolutionary Chinese Organisations on the Territory of the Far Eastern Republic...*, p. 362.

munism is the core of socialism. The whole of humanity is moving towards communism. In China, in view of its inherent national and historical features and traditions, this path is the easiest and most suitable".

Korean working people were also active in the communist movement of foreign workers and peasants in Soviet Russia. Korean communist groups began to appear in the Far East in 1919 during the bitter Civil War, and their number increased particularly rapidly in 1920 and 1921. At the end of 1920 there were no less than 16 Korean Party organisations with 2,305 members and candidate members in Soviet Russia (including in Moscow, but chiefly in the Far East and Siberia).¹ The activity of the Korean Communists in the Far East was guided by corresponding sections of the RCP(B) regional committees and headed by the Korean Section of the Far Eastern Bureau of the CC RCP(B).² Later, not only territorial Korean committees appeared there, but even a Central Committee of Korean Communist Organisations was set up in July 1920.³ In spite of the fact that they were underground organisations and functioned at the time of the Civil War all of which made things very difficult for them, the Korean Communists conducted extensive propaganda and military organisational work wherever their fellow-countrymen were to be found. Leaflets, pamphlets and a number of newspapers were put out in Korean; Korean units of the Red Army fought heroically against the Japanese interventionists and the Whiteguards who occupied part of the Soviet Far East.

The Korean Communists strove to set up their own national Communist Party. This desire was stimulated by their membership in the RCP(B) and active participation in the armed class struggle. The Vladivostok Congress of two Korean organisations, the Union of Korean Socialists and the Union of New Citizens, which took place in April 1919 was a step in this direction. The Congress founded the

¹ Calculated on the basis of very incomplete data published in the journal *The Peoples of the Far East*, Irkutsk, 1921, No. 2, pp. 212-17 (in Russian).

² See: S. A. Tsytkin, *Participation of Korean Working People...* p. 179 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 18; see also CPA IML, s. 372, r. 1, f. 434, p. 17.

Korean Socialist Party which announced its accession to the Comintern.¹

Pak Din Shun, one of the leaders of the Korean Socialist Party who subsequently attended the Second Congress of the Comintern, wrote an article about the Vladivostok Congress and described its tactics in the national-colonial revolution. The Congress acknowledged that the powerful national liberation movement which had developed in March 1919 in Korea was headed by the bourgeoisie. The conclusion was drawn on this basis that the struggle of the masses was directed along "the false road of national antagonism" and that, naturally, "it could not attain the desired results under such conditions". Nevertheless, the Congress believed it "inexpedient to counteract the developing movement whatever form it might take". At the same time it was decided to develop a propaganda campaign to direct the movement into the channel of class struggle. Pak Din Shun further wrote that the Korean socialists were against the unification of the working people with the national bourgeoisie for a joint fight against the Japanese imperialists. The Korean Socialist Party decided "not to succumb to the hypocritical and false assertions of bourgeois politicians, because the working people would suffer just as much under the oppression of the Korean bourgeoisie as it is suffering at present from the arbitrary rule of the predatory Japanese imperialism". After its last congress (April 1919), concluded Pak Din Shun, the Korean Socialist Party completely dissociated itself from the Korean bourgeoisie and gentry, went over to the platform of class struggle and proclaimed "Free Korean Republic" as its slogan.² Pak Din Shun comprehensively formulated and thoroughly substantiated the position which was upheld by many of the first Communists of the East concerning the nature of the national liberation movement in the Asian countries and the attitude of the proletarian party to it.

As regards the Indians, they arrived in the Soviet Republic later and in much smaller numbers than represen-

¹ Jeeshun Pak (Pak Din Shun), "The Socialist Movement in Korea", *The Communist International*, 1919, No. 7-8, p. 1173 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 1174.

tatives of the neighbouring Eastern countries, and naturally began to join the communist movement also at a later date. On top of that most of the Indian emigrants were revolutionaries only in the national and not the communist sense at first. This being the case the shift to Marxist position of the more progressive elements among them was a natural development, but not an instantaneous one. In Tashkent fairly rapid progress towards communism was made by a part of the Indian Section of the Council for International Propaganda which embraced only some 8 people.¹ Its nucleus consisted of representatives of the so-called Provisional Émigré Government of India in Kabul. As early as in April 1920 some members of the section proclaimed themselves Communists (Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Safiq, Abdul Majid),² and tried to set up an Indian communist organisation.³ But on April 15, 1920 the Executive Committee of the Comintern informed the CC RCP(B) that the "Indian communist organisation under the International has not yet been formed". Neither was it established after the arrival of the Indian Revolutionary Association consisting of 28 members in Tashkent in early July 1920.

The number of proponents of communist ideals, however, continued to grow as émigrés, participants in the Caliphate exodus from India (October-November 1920), kept arriving in Tashkent. Three or four of the people who filled in the 84 forms which we mentioned above definitely entertained communist sympathies.

The first group of Indian Communists was formed only in October 1920 following the arrival in Tashkent of Indians who had attended the Second Congress of the Comintern. On October 17, on the initiative of M. N. Roy and H. Mukherjee this group of seven people proclaimed itself the Communist Party of India. It was a premature step and fully mirrored the left-sectarian impatience of its organisers. Evidently it was not accidental that its membership increased very slowly and by December counted only 13

¹ CPA IML, s. 544, r. 1, f. 1, p. 19.

² See: M. A. Persits, *Revolutionaries of India in the Soviet Land*, pp. 56, 89, 91 (in Russian).

³ See: *Izvestia* (Tashkent), May 7, 1920.

people.¹ The reason was M. N. Roy's left-sectarian stand.² Having launched what in effect was necessary agitation for the creation of a communist organisation among the Indian émigrés, he directed it against the political aspirations of the national revolutionaries, discredited them and outraged their ideals, all of which was absolutely impermissible. He and his group tried to persuade the Indians that a national revolution was strictly speaking not a revolution, for it could not emancipate the working people from the local exploiters who were no better than the British. M. N. Roy sought to impress upon his listeners that in order to be worthy of the efforts which would be expended to accomplish it, a real revolution could be only a communist one.³ Propaganda of this sort evoked protest from the majority of the émigrés, for in effect it was an attempt to convince them that the cause for which they fought and were ready to take up arms, for the sake of which they sacrificed themselves to privations and undertook an arduous journey, was a meaningless, or, in any case, an unnecessary undertaking for the Indian people.

In a word it was wrong in essence and tactically harmful to debunk the ideas of the struggle for national independence and to set communist principles against them among the national revolutionaries.

Clearly the efforts which were channelled into the formation of the Communist Party produced much smaller results than Roy had expected. Nevertheless the first Indian communist group was eventually set up and after work among

¹ The Party Archive of the Uzbek Republic, s. 60, r. 1, f. 194, p. 2; CPA IML.

² It was precisely the Indian revolutionary M. N. Roy who most vividly expressed the idea that the immediate task facing the East and India in particular was the accomplishment of a socialist revolution. At the Second Congress of the Comintern he presented numerous arguments in support of his leftist tactical line in the national liberation revolution. See: A. B. Reznikov, "V. I. Lenin on the National Liberation Movement", *Kommunist*, 1967, No. 7, pp. 97-102, and "V. I. Lenin's Struggle Against Sectarian Perversities in the National and Colonial Question", *Ibid.*, 1968, No. 5, pp. 36-47; M. A. Persits, *Revolutionaries of India in the Soviet Land...*, pp. 94-120 (in Russian).

³ M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, p. 464.

the Indians was transferred to Moscow its membership increased more than twofold.

The communist movement of Eastern nationals in Russia in 1918-20 adhered to revolutionary positions envisaging the defence of the Soviet Russia against foreign intervention and a relentless struggle against imperialism. At the same time the communist groups which then came into being did not comprehend, and this was typical of them, the important distinctions which existed between the socio-economic conditions in the independent developed and semi-developed capitalist countries and the pre-capitalist conditions in the majority of the oppressed Asian and African countries. During their formation these communist organisations shaped a very pronounced leftist course: they denied the bourgeois-democratic nature of the revolution in the Asian countries and proclaimed a course towards a socialist revolution, and by refusing to recognise the revolutionary potential of the national bourgeoisie they rejected the possibility of forming an anti-imperialist bloc with it. On the other hand, this initial communist movement which arose among the citizens of the oppressed countries of the East was of great historical significance because it was the first and essential element in the process of the formation of national Communist parties which developed almost simultaneously in China, India, Iran, Turkey and Korea.

Two-way links were established and vigorously developed between the Eastern communist groups in Soviet Russia and the revolutionary forces in Asian countries. This was largely due to the gradual return of the Eastern working people to their home-countries and the all-round assistance of the Soviets to the Eastern revolutionaries who came to Russia.

This increased the revolutionising influence of the October Revolution on the oppressed Asian countries and accelerated the development of the communist movement in them. This meant that Soviet power and the Bolshevik Party helped to create and develop the initial elements of the communist movement among the working people of the nearby Eastern countries.

Otto Kuusinen expressed this thought when he told the First Congress of the Comintern in March 1919 that for

over a year following its establishment revolutionary Russia was virtually a new International.¹

At the same time by their revolutionary and internationalist activity the communist and socialist groups formed among the working people of the Eastern countries in Soviet Russia laid the foundations of the Comintern. These groups fought in defence of Soviet power and spread progressive socialist ideas ensuring the consistent nature of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The Comintern was founded in March 1919 at a congress in Moscow. But the prerequisites for its formation began to take shape when Communist parties and groups in the West and East emerged and united round the Bolsheviks and Soviet Russia.

The *Manifesto of the First Congress of the Comintern* ripped the mask off the colonial policy of imperialism, and moved to the fore of the revolutionary struggle the goal of liberating the oppressed peoples of the East. This document expressed the concept that it would be possible for the Eastern countries to follow the non-capitalist road provided they had the ideological and material support of European socialist countries. The liberation of the colonies and semi-colonies, it stated, was linked with the victory of proletarian revolutions in the metropolitan countries. In its decisions the First Congress voiced the Comintern's determination to support the national liberation movement and build up a broad anti-imperialist front of oppressed peoples in order to put an end to colonialism.

During the discussion of the text of the *Manifesto* Sebald Rutgers of the Dutch Communist Party said: "It would be desirable to speak in greater detail about the colonial policy in order to couch this point in terms which would make it absolutely clear to the population of the colonies that we wish to act together with them whether or not these peoples have their own ideology and religion. We are prepared to act together with them on the basis of resistance to imperialism."

¹ *The First Congress of the Communist International, 1921*, p. 93 (in Russian).

In a political programme adopted on March 4, 1919, the First Congress unequivocally stipulated that it would "support the exploited peoples of the colonies in their struggle against imperialism".¹

The Congress for the first time proclaimed the slogan: "Long live the revolutionary alliance of the oppressed peoples of the East with the socialist workers of Russia and Europe".² These premises on the colonial issue adopted by the Comintern First Congress were developed and theoretically substantiated in connection with the rise of the communist movement in the Eastern countries, so that by mid-1920 the "old" national-colonial question acquired new and very important aspects. A new problem arose, that of the correlation of the two movements in the East, the communist and the national liberation. It was Lenin who undertook theoretically to elaborate it, even though the complex and extremely difficult situation in Russia at the time compelled the Soviet Communists to concentrate on fighting the Civil War in order to save the revolution. The Second Congress of the Comintern a year later was to hear Lenin and endorse his principles of communist strategy and tactics in the national liberation movement.

THE MILITARY FACTOR IN THE LIBERATION OF THE EASTERN COUNTRIES

The infantile disorder of "leftism" which was peculiar to many first generation Eastern Communists, manifested itself primarily in the premature course towards a socialist revolution in Asian countries and in the tactics of ignoring the anti-imperialist role of the national bourgeoisie. This malady had other symptoms, too. Some of the novice Communists in the Asian countries and even a fairly large number of Soviet Communists overestimated the significance of the military factor for the national and social emancipation of the colonies. The "leftists" suggested that the stage of

¹ *The First Congress of the Communist International*, p. 94; *Communist International. Documents (1919-1932)*, Moscow, 1933, p. 66 (in Russian).

² See: *The Communist International*, 1918, No. 4, p. 563 (in Russian).

the democratic struggle for national independence should be bypassed, or to be precise, that the national liberation revolution should be transformed into a socialist revolution and thus make it possible to attain national liberation and social emancipation at one and the same time. Yet there is no reason to assert that the "leftists" were blind to the fact that the proletariat in the Eastern countries was either extremely weak and numerically small, or did not exist altogether, although in words they exaggerated the maturity of the working class and its movement. Neither were they unaware that the bulk of the working people were the peasants who were ignorant, illiterate, fanatically religious and for the most part subject to the influence of the reactionary classes. Pondering how best to surmount these inhibiting factors they decided that only a military campaign of revolutionary armies from Soviet Russia would ensure a simultaneous victory of the national and socialist revolutions in the adjacent Eastern countries.

They were active participants in the armed struggle for Soviet power and beleived that the path of painstaking preparation of the internal forces for a successful national liberation and, all the more so, for a socialist revolution was either much too long at the best or absolutely impossible at the worst.

It would seem that the Red Army's successes in the Civil War justified the views of "Left" Communists. They saw and registered only the victories of the Soviet troops, but tended to forget that behind these victories were years and years of hard work which the Party conducted to educate the masses, to get the working-class movement to assimilate the ideas of scientific communism, and to strengthen the proletarian vanguard organisationally, ideologically and theoretically. Furthermore, the "leftists" wrongly estimated the significance of the anti-imperialist upsurge which gripped many Eastern countries at the time. It seemed to them that the truly powerful liberation movement in these countries could be more or less easily turned against their own exploiters, and not only against the feudal lords, but also against the national bourgeoisie although the latter was usually at the head of this movement. Some of them believed that as soon as a revolutionary army would enter

an oppressed country, a revolutionary situation would develop and a national uprising would hit foreign and national oppressors.

Obviously, the views of the first Communists of the East and some of the "left" members of the RCP(B) lacked theoretical maturity. Their tactic of revolutionary war as a means of stimulating the growth of the national liberation revolution into a socialist one was unjustified. But their active participation in the Civil War against the Whiteguards and the interventionists in Russia was absolutely justified, and not only because it strengthened socialist Russia, the mainstay of world revolution, but also because it weakened international imperialism, the chief enemy of the oppressed peoples of the East.

The inadequate Marxist-Leninist grounding, so natural for the young Communists of Asia, was by no means the only reason underlying their tactic of revolutionary war. It was rooted in the first place in the fact that international imperialism organised an armed intervention of fourteen powers against Soviet Russia which was launched from the territories of neighbouring Eastern countries, namely Turkey, Iran, China and Mongolia. Japanese militarists and Russian Whiteguards who operated with US, British and French support organised an armed attack on Soviet Russia from Northeast China and Mongolia. Under Japan's pressure the militarist Peking government also took part in the anti-Soviet intervention. In the intervention against the Soviets the German imperialists used the troops of the Turkish Sultan's government to invade the Transcaucasus. After that the Entente powers, which had occupied Turkey and Iran, invaded Soviet Russia in the south. Under these circumstances the young Communists of the East had more than enough reason to believe that the armed rebuff delivered to the imperialists was bound to develop into a military liberation mission into the colonies and semi-colonies adjoining Russia. Consequently, the tactic of revolutionary war was not altogether historically unfounded.

The thesis about a military liberation mission was first propounded at the First All-Russia Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East held from November 4 to 12, 1918 in Moscow. In its report the Cen-

tral Commissariat for Muslim Affairs informed the Congress that in its activities it proceeded from the need to liberate Muslim countries from imperialist domination. With this end in view it spread "the ideas of social revolution among Turkish POWs and took practical steps to prepare them for it by forming a Red Army unit consisting of Turkish workers and peasants, which, at a convenient moment, could be used as a nucleus for organising a proletarian uprising in Turkey".¹ On the last day of the Congress the Turkish delegation which included the Socialists-Communists Mustafa Subhi, Djevdet Ali, Magomet Nazmi and Ismail Lutfi² issued a statement to the effect that it considered it necessary to "bring about a revolution in Turkey, for which purpose it is necessary to mobilise forces, and therefore the faction calls upon all its members to pool their efforts and fight directly for the revolution". In this connection it proposed a range of practical measures including "the concentration of all Turkish communist detachments on the Southern Front, replenishing them with Turkish POWs in Russia".³

The Congress decided to submit this proposal to the Central Bureau of Muslim Organisations of the RCP(B).⁴ At the same time in its general resolution on the current situation the Congress recommended "taking urgent measures for concentrating Turkish worker and peasant POWs, organising them into Red Army units and dispatching them to the Southern Front" (Point 6) and "immediate and effective steps to prepare the ground for a revolutionary movement in the East" (Point 7).⁵

In the spring of 1919 Turkish internationalists began to concentrate in the Crimea and form military units.⁶ Reports

¹ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 1, p. 322.

² *Ibid.*, f. 3, pp. 9, 12.

³ *Ibid.*, f. 1, p. 195.

⁴ *The Life of Nationalities*, November 24, 1918, p. 2.

⁵ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 1, p. 165.

⁶ There are numerous records in the register of outgoing papers of the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East of the issuance of mandates to "comrades prisoners of war" who were going to the Crimea "to form the first Red Army detachment consisting of Turks". It was also indicated that Fegli Yusupov would be its commander. (CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 212, p. 26.)

said that there were "ten thousand Turkish proletarians in the Crimea"¹ at the time.

The idea to use the army as the main force of the national and social emancipation of the colonies and semi-colonies won many supporters. Their numbers increased as the Red Army continued to advance eastward and liberate Soviet territories in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Siberia and the Far East.

In 1920 members of the Central Organisational Bureau of Chinese Communists drafted a plan for an armed drive on the Chinese capital with the view to overthrowing the reactionary Peking government. Evidently their intention was to deliver a concerted blow by Chinese revolutionary detachments along three directions: from Central Asia (Sinkiang), from Manchuria, and from South China.

Member of the Organisational Bureau Liu Chiang (Fedorov) went to Shanghai to co-ordinate this military plan with Sun Yat-sen who headed the revolutionary movement in the South of China at the time.

In a written report about his trip Liu Chiang gave a fairly detailed account of the purpose of the planned operation. It envisaged "the immediate unification of Chinese revolutionary forces stationed in South China, Central Russia,² and the Far East³ so as jointly and in full contact with each other to lay the groundwork for a campaign against the reactionary government in the North". It was contemplated that Chinese shock units "in Soviet Russia and the South of China will be concentrated in Sinkiang Province on the border of the Semipalatinsk and Semirechiye regions near Chinese Turkestan where partial recruitment of volunteers is currently in progress".⁴ The leading centre of the revolutionary drive was to have been sited in Blagoveshchensk.

¹ *The Life of Nationalities*, May 25, 1919, p. 4.

² Evidently these were Chinese volunteer units which were in action with the Red Army on the fronts of the Civil War.

³ Clearly this refers to units of Chinese volunteers of the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic and Chinese partisan detachments which fought against the Japanese occupying forces in Manchuria.

⁴ The Central State Archive of the Far East, s. 1006, r. 2, f. 44, p. 158.

The idea that the army would help the socialist revolution to score a swift victory was quite popular among Chinese Communists. They were even prepared if necessary to raise an army out of the déclassé elements and the numerous groups of bandits active in China at the time. In the middle of 1921 in a report which was to be delivered at the Third Congress of the Comintern, Chang Tai-lei, a representative of the Chinese Communist Party, described Chinese lumpen proletarians who were united into bandit gangs as "militant revolutionary material", albeit "raw", which should be used "to promote broad guerrilla warfare in the country" directed against the foreign oppressors and local militarists.¹

Some Chinese Communists worked on plans for organising an armed campaign of revolutionary armies into China in 1922 as well. In June that year the Far Eastern Bureau of the CC RCP(B) met specially to examine one such plan. It was put forward by two partisan commanders Liu Hsiang-hu and Li Chang-li whose detachment operated in Tsitsihar Province and near the Ussuri border of the Far Eastern Republic.

They requested assistance either in shifting partisan detachments (up to 30,000 men) to Sinkiang for the purpose of capturing this province, or in supporting the organisation of an immediate drive into the Hsingchuang and Sang-ching provinces.² On June 20 the Far Eastern Bureau on motion of the Commander-in-Chief of the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic V. K. Blukher decisively turned down this plan and noted that "there was almost no communist influence" in these detachments. The Bureau, therefore, agreed "to organise a political education department for the Chinese comrades under the military-political school of the People's Revolutionary Army" and assist the partisan liberation movement in Manchuria with food, ammunition and weapons.³

¹ "The Chinese Communist Party at the Third Congress of Comintern (Report of the Chinese Delegation)", *The Peoples of the Far East*, 1921, No. 3, p. 325.

² CPA IML, s. 17, r. 14, f. 203, p. 75. Evidently the provinces were Szechwan and Shansi.

³ *Ibid.*

At the First Congress of the Persian Adalat Party in June 1920 the opinion was voiced that the Persian working people could be liberated only by armed force and that liberation of Persia from imperialist oppression could come about only as a result of an armed struggle.¹

The Indian Communists, too, tried to organise a liberation campaign into India through Afghanistan.

M. N. Roy planned this campaign in very great detail. He proposed that a liberation army which would drive the British colonialists out of India should include Afghan frontier tribes and also those Indians who, in protest against British oppression, joined the Caliphate exodus, left their homeland and were living either in Afghanistan or in Soviet Central Asia. Indian revolutionaries requested Soviet Russia for assistance and received it. By granting this assistance the Soviet government acted in line with its consistent policy of supporting the anti-imperialist liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples although it was fully aware that since India lacked the necessary subjective and objective revolutionary factors, this plan had very slim chances of succeeding. At the end of 1920, military training course for Indian revolutionaries was organised in Turkestan where they were also issued uniforms and training weapons.² But the Kabul government gave in to British pressure and made it extremely difficult for the Indians to cross into Soviet Russia.

In 1920 official permission to cross the northern frontier was granted only to three groups (about 200 people) of Indians. Many others, however, who were making the passage on their own, crossed it illegally. Lenin foresaw that the Emir would take a negative stand. He told Roy prior to the latter's departure for Tashkent after the Second Congress of the Comintern, that his plans were adventuristic and argued that other methods of struggle which could expedite the appearance of a revolutionary situation in the country had to be devised. This transpires even from Roy's

¹ See: *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 14, p. 2889.

² See: *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, pp. 417-21; I. S. Sologubov, *Foreign Communists in Turkestan*, p. 56.

own account, for his obvious attempt to belittle the importance of Lenin's position.¹

Especially energetic efforts to promote the idea of the military campaign in the East were made by the newspaper *Zhyzn natsionalnostei* (*The Life of Nationalities*), and by a considerable portion of the staff of the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East. At the time the national liberation movement in the East was spreading under the impact of the October Revolution and the Red Army's successes in the Civil War. The proletariat and the peasantry were playing a perceptibly more prominent role in this movement and in some countries (Persia, China, Korea) armed guerrillas launched operations against the imperialist troops. All these factors created a natural urge to spur on the revolution in the neighbouring Asian countries. In a letter to the RCP(B) Central Committee the Central Bureau frankly declared that the development and the deepening of the revolutionary movement in the East was turning the Central Bureau into a military organisation.² *The Life of Nationalities* published articles substantiating the thesis that it was necessary to organise a revolutionary drive to the East. In one of its editorials the paper sought to prove that "all that is necessary is to give Turkestan a powerful army and the cause of the revolution in Asia will begin to make giant strides forward".³ Although the East had awakened, another editorial asserted, "without active assistance from the outside by the fresh untapped forces of Russia's Muslims it can once again fall into a lethargic sleep of spineless inertness and apathy. Let Britain, which has always been afraid of the spectre of a Cossack lance on the peaks of the Himalayas, now see this historical lance in the hands of Russia's Muslim-proletarian coming to the aid of his brothers in Persia, India and Afghanistan".⁴

Some anti-Party elements in the RCP(B) itself supported

¹ See: *M. A. Roy's Memoirs*, p. 417; M. I. Andronov, "From the History of the Awakening of the East", *New Times*, 1967, No. 14.

² CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 29, p. 48.

³ *The Life of Nationalities*, June 15, 1919.

⁴ Palyukaitis, "Turkestan and the Revolution in the East", *The Life of Nationalities*, May 25, 1919.

and even fanned these leftist, adventurist tendencies. In August 1919, for example, Trotsky submitted a proposal to the CC RCP(B) to organise a military campaign against India and thus expedite the revolution in Europe. He motivated his project by writing that the "road to Paris and London lies via the towns of Afghanistan, the Punjab and Bengal".¹ Naturally, the Central Committee with Lenin's active participation, turned down this adventurist scheme.

With amazing and at times naive faith in the omnipotence of the ideas of the revolution some of the "leftists" among the Soviet Communists asserted that since the ideology of socialism expressed the interests of the working people, it would, as soon as it appeared in the Eastern countries be immediately accepted by their peoples who would promptly turn their backs on bourgeois leaders with their ideological delusions. "The colonial enslavers in the East," wrote Efendiev, "have heaped such untold sufferings on the heads of the natives, that their Bolshevik movement simply has to get the best of all other movements, including the national-clerical.... All these political teachings are in fact the result of a misunderstanding which arose because owing to backward and obsolete economic relations there was no working-class movement and no knowledge of the findings of sociology, i.e. international socialism.... Now that the struggle of an international proletarian detachment in the Soviet Republic has been placed on a practical footing, the old ideologists of the liberation of the East should surrender." Carried away beyond all reasonable limits Efendiev went on to say: "If in the hope of capturing great booty decrepit tsarism could, with some degree of reality, plan an invasion and the seizure of India via several hostile countries, then why cannot workers' and peasants' Russia, which evokes such great hopes in the hearts of the peoples of the East, do something along the same lines in order to give the Indians the Bolshevik ideology."²

¹ *The Trotsky Papers 1917-1922*, Vol. I, London, The Hague, Paris, 1964, p. 625.

² Efendiev, "The Problems of the East", *The Life of Nationalities*, October 26, 1919.

Sultan-Galiev went even farther. He wrote an article criticising the Soviet Government's Eastern policy and accused it of lacking a firm and confident course. He claimed that the withdrawal of Russian troops from Persia, where the tsarist government had sent them, was "a reflection and acknowledgement of our own impotence".¹ In effect Sultan-Galiev repudiated the very essence of the Leninist policy of friendship of the peoples and support for the national liberation movement of the oppressed Eastern countries.

On January 20, 1920, shortly after the publication of this article, a group of members of the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East headed by Sultan-Galiev sent a memorandum to the Central Committee of the RCP(B). In it they enlarged on the ideas expounded in the article, called for "turning from words and dreams to deeds", and tried to prove that a correct, i.e., a "determined and bold" policy of revolutionising the East would have made it possible "to prompt the colonial East to rise against international imperialism in the person of the Entente and thus solve the problem of a world social revolution if not by two-thirds then at least by one half. The ground has been prepared for this in the East and it now waits its tiller". With this end in view they proposed that J. V. Stalin be appointed to the post of Foreign Commissar for Eastern Affairs and "placed in charge of the entire domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet Government in the East".²

The Party rejected this course, for it held, as Lenin did, that "not speedier revolution, but speedier preparations for revolution" were needed.³ This was the basic distinction between the Party and the "leftist" revolutionaries. Lenin firmly rejected the method of introducing revolution by external military methods and advocated the formation of a vanguard revolutionary party which would educate and organise the masses.

¹ Sultan-Galiev, "The Socialist Revolution and the East", *The Life of Nationalities*, October 5, 1919.

² CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 29, pp. 21, 22.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 455 (in Russian).

Lenin pointed out time and again that revolution should not be exported, that a social revolution could take place only when it had fully matured and the proletariat had dissociated itself from its bourgeoisie and would be ready to assume the leadership of the struggle. Opposing Bukharin who attempted to prove that it would be wrong to recognise the right of nations to self-determination, Lenin told the Eighth Congress of the Party: "Let us even assume that the Bashkirs have overthrown the exploiters and we have helped them to do so. This is possible only when a revolution has fully matured, and it must be done cautiously, so as not to retard by one's interference that very process of the differentiation of the proletariat which we ought to expedite. What, then, can we do in relation to such peoples as the Kirghiz, the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Turkmen, who to this day are under the influence of their mullahs? Here, in Russia, the population, having had a long experience of the priests, helped us to overthrow them. But you know how badly the decree on civil marriage is still being put into effect. Can we approach these peoples and tell them that we shall overthrow their exploiters? We cannot do this, because they are entirely subordinated to their mullahs. In such cases we have to wait until the given nation develops, until the differentiation of the proletariat from the bourgeois elements, which is inevitable, has taken place."¹

The proponents of a revolution in Asia promoted with the help of a military campaign refused to take into account the level of social development of the nation concerned and to engage in prolonged work to expedite this development and pave the way for the revolution. Their stand mirrored their lack of confidence in the revolutionary potentialities of the popular masses and the national bourgeoisie in the Asian countries. It was equivalent to the export of revolution which the Party opposed and Marxism-Leninism rejected.

The role of the military factor in the national-colonial revolutions once again came up for discussion at the Second All-Russia Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East (November 22 to December 3,

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) March 18-23, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 172.

1919). The main speaker on this question was Sultan-Galiev. He dwelt upon the idea that the Red Army's victories over the Whiteguard General Denikin and Admiral Kolchak, and also the end of the Civil War would merely provide a breathing spell that would be followed by an international revolution and an international civil war in which the peoples of Persia, Turkey, India, Afghanistan and other oppressed countries of the East would be inevitably involved. "We should prepare for this struggle," he said. "For this purpose we ought to form an Eastern Red Army out of the already revolutionised peoples of the East—Tatars, Bashkirs, Turkestanians, and Kirghizes—which would operate in the East ... against international imperialism or against the East itself if the East would be used by imperialism."¹

It is interesting to note that Sultan-Galiev said that the idea of raising a Muslim, or Eastern, Red Army, emanated from the Central Bureau of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East and had Trotsky's backing.²

Sultan-Galiev's proposal to raise a Muslim army and prepare it for a drive to the East received a strong rebuff from the representative of the Republic's Military Revolutionary Council R. P. Katanyan.³ He said on November 27: "When comrade Sultan-Galiev declared that Muslim units had to be concentrated in designated areas so that they would be at the disposal of Muslims, I wanted to ask him: have you forgotten that when the army of Whiteguard General Udenich was moving on Petrograd, the Bashkir Brigade performed a great service to the Revolution by fighting on the banks of the Neva? Denikin is advancing.

¹ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, pp. 206-07.

² *Ibid.*, p. 179.

³ Ruben Pavlovich Katanyan (1881-1967) joined the Bolshevik Party in 1903, and was active in the revolutionary movement in Russia. During the Revolution of 1917 he was on the staff of the newspaper *Izvestia of the Military Revolutionary Committee*. In 1919 he was editor of the *Krasny Voin* newspaper of the 11th Army and then Chief of the Political Department of the Republican Military Revolutionary Committee. In 1920 and 1921 he was in charge of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the CC RCP(B). From 1923 to 1937 he held leading judicial posts.

Now we need every available person ... but we are told: withdraw these soldiers. And I should like to ask—where do we stand? Is Denikin smashed? And are the Muslim units¹ performing a job that is alien to them? By driving Denikin back are they not liberating Daghestan and Azerbaijan and helping the revolution to spread to Persia and then further and further so that it would embrace the whole of Asia... Muslim units must remain where the revolution needs them." Katanyan explained how revolutionisation of the East should be understood, and said that it had to be carried out by spreading ideas and not with the help of bayonets. "The Communists who go to the East," he said, "should be able to offer the people certain social slogans. In the first place the demand 'all land to the people', and when this demand is fulfilled a great Red Army will be raised on the spot it will unite with our army, mount an offensive and will ultimately achieve victory."²

V. L. Lukashov who supported Katanyan declared his opposition to alleged need to "concentrate military forces in the East".³ A strong statement was made by Said-Galiev, who said: "We cannot send an army of bayonets to the East now. A revolution cannot be introduced from the outside. A revolution has to be introduced from the inside."⁴ Evidently there were other statements of a similar nature.⁵

Nevertheless the Congress supported Sultan-Galiev's nationalistic-leftist thesis and passed a resolution on his report on the Eastern question recommending "to begin the organisation of an Eastern internationalist class Red Army as part of the international Red Army".⁶ However, the Soviet Government, with Lenin's approval, turned down the idea

¹ This is a reference to Bashkir, Tatar, Persian, Turkish and other ethnic military units which were raised at the time. They were incorporated into the Red Army and fought under its command during the Civil War.

² CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, pp. 231-32.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 235-36.

⁵ Impossible to say exactly how many because of the extremely bad condition of the verbatim report.

⁶ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 65, f. 9, p. 56.

of forming a Muslim army. In this connection an interesting conversation took place over a direct line between the Commander-in-Chief of the Turkestan Front Mikhail Frunze who was in Samara at the time, and Shalva Eliava, member of the Turkestan Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee, who was in Tashkent. Here is an excerpt from a record of their conversation.

Eliava: "My first question is about the formation of Muslim units. Muslim Communists insist on their immediate formation. In their opinion this should result in the formation of a Muslim Red Army. They also insist on the organisation of training courses for the command personnel with instruction in the Uzbek language. In both cases they are urged by Turkish POW officers who offer their services as instructors. I consider that the question of the formation and mobilisation of Muslims in the form of separate units and not in the form of a separate Muslim army is decided in principle....¹ In my opinion the Muslim Army HQ which was set up here prior to our arrival should be abolished."

Frunze: "First, as regards the Muslim HQ and units.... There should be no separate HQ and no Muslim army. I've discussed the matter once again with Lenin ... and it should not be taken up again. Native units, of course, can be formed though not along religious lines, but as you have very justly noted along national lines."²

Quite clearly leftist-nationalist views on the role of the military factor in the liberation of the eastern countries were fairly widespread both among the foreign Eastern Communists and some Soviet Communists. These erroneous views could be overcome not only by administrative action of the central authority, and in this case it was absolutely essential, but also by very considerable political work which was conducted by the Communist Party, Lenin and the Comintern.

¹ Further in the conversation Eliava explained that he had in view separate ethnic units—Uzbek, Tajik, Turkmen and Kirghis—as elements of the Red Army.

² CPA IML, s. 122, r. 1, f. 44, p. 21.

THE ROLE AND NATURE OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT IN THE EAST

The Second All-Russia Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East also examined other aspects of the national liberation and working-class movement in the Asian countries.

In his famous speech on the first day of the Congress, Lenin, among other things, substantiated the need for the Communists to support the bourgeois national liberation movement in the East.¹ It would have seemed that after his speech the discussion at the Congress could have been conducted at a higher theoretical level. But evidently the delegates, many of whom were afflicted with extreme left ideas and lacked adequate Marxist grounding, needed a great deal of time thoroughly to grasp Lenin's propositions and make them their political platform.

The delegates heatedly debated on the subject of the role the liberation struggle in the East played in the world revolutionary process. Sultan-Galiev in his keynote report intended to prove that the East was not only a great but also the essential force of this process, and that the basic levers of a world social revolution were concentrated precisely in that part of the world. Other delegates expressed the same opinion. Evidently *The Life of Nationalities* in its report on the results of Congress on December 7, 1919, had reason to observe: "One gathered the impression that in the comrades' opinion the virgin soil of the East was more receptive to the ideas of communism, than the corrupt West." "The East," declared Sultan-Galiev, "is a revolutionary cauldron which can flood the whole of Western Europe in revolution."² He proceeded from the assumption that the East was the principal economic source of the existence of Western capitalism, and that without it the imperialism bourgeoisie would be unable to restrain the advancing proletariat of the West with handouts. "When Western workers begin to confront their bourgeoisie with diverse economic

demands," he said, "this bourgeoisie almost always satisfies them, for this bourgeoisie has resources, limitless sources, from which it pumps out everything it needs."¹ He expressed the same thought in more precise terms in an article entitled "The Social Revolution and the East" published prior to the Congress. "So long as international imperialism ... holds the East as a colony in its hands, it is guaranteed a successful outcome in all its separate clashes with the working masses in the metropolitan countries over economic issues, because in these circumstances it has every opportunity to 'gag' them by agreeing to meet their demands."² But even if the revolution would win in the West without the support of the East, he went on to say, the East would all the same eventually become the decisive factor for the future of the Western revolution. In that case the bourgeoisie expelled from home would settle down in the East and would without any scruples "organise a drive of black-skinned people on Europe".³

The one-sided, narrowly nationalistic concept of the East's decisive role in the world revolutionary process completely misrepresented reality and offered a wrong orientation, and that alone was enough to make it politically harmful. As regards the economic aspect of the matter, which was presented primitively or simply unscientifically, Sultan-Galiev's concept doomed the more conscious and revolutionary proletariat of the developed capitalist countries to inactivity in anticipation of a revolution in the East. This theory was particularly dangerous because it did not rally the forces of the proletarian revolutionary movement in the West and the national liberation struggle in the East around Soviet Russia, but disunited them and oriented Soviet power towards organising a revolutionary campaign of liberation into the countries of Asia.

Having arrived at the conclusion that all revolutionary, military and other forces should be concentrated on the East, for only the East had revolutionary prospects, the proponents of this theory had to decide what slogans should be adopted for the drive into the East. Actually it was a ques-

¹ More about Lenin's speech below.

² CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, p. 203.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

² *The Life of Nationalities*, October 5, 1919.

³ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, p. 203.

tion of the nature of the forthcoming revolution in Asia. And although many of the speakers agreed that it would be a socialist revolution, which, like the one in Russia, would at the same time manage to solve bourgeois-democratic tasks, a fairly large number of them simply had to take account of the realities which did not fit into their artificial conceptions. Sultan-Galiev said that since a socialist revolution in Asian countries was imminent, the Communists should offer purely communist slogans to their peoples.

Objections were raised by V. L. Lukashov. He pointed out that owing to the low level of its socio-economic development the East was in no position immediately to assimilate communist ideology. "If we come to the East with communism," he said, "the East will push us out. There is no place in the East for communism in form in which we studied it." Accordingly he proposed to "go along with nationalism", and through nationalism which was understandable to the masses, to bring them "socialist beginnings". In his opinion the formation of independent national states in the East should be a transitional stage to social reorganisation. Although, he said, the East already had "all conditions, economic and agrarian, which make it possible to build this (socialist—*M. P.*) system, they are not yet realised" by the people, and that was the only reason why an immediate socialist revolution was impossible. It is our duty, he said, in the first place to help the people realise that these conditions actually exist. And when these national states are created "they will promptly embark upon internal reorganisation on a social basis".¹ The thought is vaguely expressed, and evidently the poor stenographic record is also to blame. Still it is clear that Lukashov drew the necessary conclusions from Lenin's speech on the first day of the Congress in which he proved that the countries of the East were heading towards a national revolution whose development would pave the way for a socialist revolution.

An interesting position was adopted by Nariman Narimanov who disagreed that there were no objective condi-

¹ CPA IML, s. 17, r. 2, f. 4, pp. 210, 253, 258.

tions in the East for a socialist revolution. "I say that there are," he declared. "There is the peasantry whose position makes it capable of accomplishing a socialist revolution and thus compensating for the lack of 'truly united workers' masses' in the East." He believed that "Communists should go to the East with the slogan: he who does not work neither shall he eat. The East needs nothing else and thus we'll be able to persecute all parasites, traders, profiteers and khans. In this form Soviet power will, I'm sure, find receptive soil in Persia, and in Turkey, and in Bukhara and in Khiva."¹

The discussion at the Second All-Russia Congress of the Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East disclosed that both Soviet and Eastern Communists earnestly searched for answers to many questions posed by the upsurge of the national liberation movement in Asian countries. But the theoretical level of their views was inadequate and they formulated many erroneous conclusions, because talking about the East they lacked detailed knowledge of the correlation of class forces and the socio-economic position of the countries concerned. It was still necessary to develop the Marxist theory about the national liberation movement under the conditions created by the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia and the emergence of the communist movement in Asia. One of the delegates, S. Said-Galiev, dwelt on the circumstances in which the Communists who worked among the peoples of the East found themselves at the time. "Not only are there no theoretical data concerning the Eastern question, but even the number of published brochures on this question is very small." Before embarking on one or another policy in Asia, he said, "it is necessary to study the East. Without a foundation we cannot look Eastward.... We are running in circles because of lack of knowledge and no one is able to say anything definite.... We are groping about".²

The resolution on the Eastern question which the Congress adopted on November 27, included several important and correct propositions whose theoretical level was consid-

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 223, 247.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 234-35.

erably higher than that of the debates at the Congress. In the first place this applied to the points defining the Communists' attitude towards the national movement in the East and stipulating the need for the unity of all the anti-imperialist forces. Paragraph 3 of the Resolution states, for instance, that the revolutionary activity of the Communists in the East should follow two directions "determined, on the one hand, by the class and revolutionary programme ... dictating the need for the gradual formation of Communist parties in the countries of the East, and on the other, by the situation in the East, which demands that up to a certain time support should be given to the national movement in the East aimed at overthrowing the domination of West European imperialism there, insofar as this movement does not run counter to the class and revolutionary aspiration of the international proletariat, to bring about the downfall of international imperialism." This thesis was further elaborated in Paragraph 9. Adopted on the initiative of the Turkestan delegation, it said that it was necessary "to co-ordinate the activities of the oppressed nationalities of the East with the activities of the revolutionary proletariat of the West", and that for this purpose "the Third International should announce that the national liberation movement in the East and the social revolution are at present working towards a common goal—the overthrow of the yoke of capitalists-imperialists".¹

These decisions reflected the beneficial impact of Lenin's address at the Congress.² The premises which he advanced were subsequently developed in his other works and became key elements of the Comintern's strategy and tactics in the national-colonial revolutions.

Lenin's report contained a profound analysis of concrete socio-economic conditions peculiar to the Eastern countries.

It was not the workers who had gone through the school of class struggle against capital who comprised the bulk of the population of the East, but typical representatives

of the peasantry suffering from medieval oppression. Consequently, Lenin said, it was necessary "to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism".¹ This being the case it was not a socialist revolution that should be placed on the agenda, but a national, bourgeois-democratic revolution directed against international imperialists and the local feudal lords. "You will have to base yourselves on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification."² Hence the inevitable conclusion that it was necessary to support the national liberation movement which had retained its revolutionary potential, to co-operate with the anti-imperialist bourgeoisie and support its struggle against foreign imperialism and local feudalism. Lenin said that it was vital to learn to apply the general communist theory to the specific conditions in the backward countries and to search for forms of an alliance of progressive proletarians of the West with the working masses in Asia in a joint struggle against imperialism.³

Many Communists found it difficult to shift from the long-accepted concept of a socialist revolution as a direct task of the Communist parties in the Eastern countries and delusions associated with that concept, to the tactic of a broad, united anti-imperialist front and to well-conceived revolutionary organisational and educational work designed to cover many long years. The struggle against leftist distortions in the national liberation movement continued. Lenin's address raised the theoretical thinking of the Communists working on the problems of the East to a qualitatively higher level. In the fight against leftist distortions the positions of Marxists-Leninists became much more convincing and firm.

Characteristic in this connection was the dispute among the Turkestan Communists which lasted from June to

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 161.

² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

³ *Ibid.*

¹ CPA IML, r. 65, f. 9, pp. 55-56.

² V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 151-62.

August 1920, on the eve of the people's revolution in Bukhara. They could not decide whether to support the Party of Young Bukhara Revolutionaries headed by Faizula Hojajev. Basing itself on Islam, this party proclaimed in its programme that it "champions the poorest masses and protects their interests against the rule of the exploiters and world imperialism" and that "in keeping with the basic laws of religion" it would "carry into life all propositions benefitting the poorest proletarian masses,¹ not only in Bukhara, but throughout the world". The programme also said that the Party "opposes the rule of the *bais* and *beks* and has set itself the task of ridding the State of Bukhara of the rule of capitalists and world imperialism with all their worst features". Thus the Party announced its intention to prevent Bukhara from developing along the capitalist road after the victory of the people's revolution. As distinct from the Bukhara Communist Party which consisted primarily of working people, the Young Bukhara Party united a fairly large proportion of the lower clergy, the oppositional bourgeoisie and bourgeois intellectuals.²

Since Bukhara was on the verge of a democratic revolution Turkestan Communists had no reason to vacillate in defining their stand towards the Young Bukhara Party. Their task was to form a united front of struggle for a democratic Bukhara with it.

On June 30, 1920, however, the Turkestan Commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee adopted the following resolution: "Taking into account that after the revolution this party (Young Bukhara—*M. P.*) may develop a tendency to act as a bourgeois party it is necessary to sever all links with the Young Bukhara democrats denying them material and moral support."³ This decision was passed by three votes to one dissenting vote cast by Valerian Kuibyshev, who was Deputy Chairman of the Turkestan Commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee

¹ Bukhara had practically no proletariat at the time.

² Memorandum dispatched most probably in July 1920 by the Turkestan Commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Turkestan Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee to the CC RCP(B).—CPA IML, s. 122, r. 1, f. 29, pp. 213-14.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

and the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR at the time. The Council for International Propaganda supported Kuibyshev and opposed the Turkestan Commission in this question. On July 21, 1920 the Council's Executive Committee expounded its standpoint in a special memorandum which said that it was incorrect to portray the Young Bukhara revolutionaries as a bourgeois-clerical party, and that, in effect, it was a vividly revolutionary party imbued with hatred for the Emir's despotic regime and having a clearly defined Soviet orientation. This document also stated that it was "illogical to destroy with your own hands an existing and functioning party ... simply because after the revolution, in a new political and social situation part of it may end up in the ranks of the counter-revolution. Then, in the new situation there will be enough time to modify our tactic with regard to these elements. Now, however, what with the shortage of revolutionary forces in Bukhara, it is uneconomical, premature and therefore harmful to push the whole party to the side of the counter-revolution."¹

This was consistent with Lenin's address at the Second Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East and his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions" intended for the Second Congress of the Comintern and published in early July 1920. The Organisational Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee examined the question of the Young Bukhara Party on July 29 and agreed that it was "necessary to provide every assistance to this organisation in its revolutionary struggle against the Emir's despotic rule."² The Communists and the Young Bukharans joined forces, thus substantially contributing to the success of the people's revolution in Bukhara.

Leftist views were overcome very slowly and with great difficulty. By mid-1920 the stand of Korean socialists in Russia had changed somewhat and became more complicated. A year earlier Pak Din Shun fully rejected the possibility of supporting national-revolutionary forces, but in an article published in July 1920 he wrote: "We use their

¹ *Ibid.*, s. 17, r. 1, f. 29, p. 272.

² *The History of the Central Asian Communist Organisations*, Tashkent, 1967, p. 434 (in Russian).

revolutionary spirit in the struggle against world capital and for the triumph of social revolution in the whole world ... we are struggling side by side with the above elements." But then followed a reservation: "We cannot regard them as comrades with whom we can go to the end without any misgivings."¹ In 1919 he asserted that the East was on the threshold of a socialist revolution, but in mid-1920 he expressed a new thought. The East, he said, would pass through two stages of the revolution, first, the bourgeois-democratic, and second, the agrarian-socialist. The first stage would be expressed in the victory of the liberal bourgeoisie and the nationalist intelligentsia, and ought to result in national independence and the establishment of a bourgeois-democratic order. The second, agrarian-socialist stage, would be accomplished by the peasant masses enslaved by feudal lords,² and would finally lead to the establishment of socialist society. How did he imagine a socialist revolution could be accomplished without a proletariat or with a very weak working class? Here Pak Din Shun elaborated the idea about the decisive role of the assistance which the socialist working class of the Western countries would be able to offer. He believed that the victory of the first stage of the revolution in Asia would coincide with the victory of the socialist revolution in the West. Once they cast off imperialist and feudal oppression, the working masses of the East would find themselves "subject to the yoke of bourgeois democracy" and then the European working class "filled with a feeling of international solidarity would come to their help". And, Pak Din Shun continued, "it will receive a cordial and fraternal welcome from the proletariat and the working peasantry of Asia, for ... interference of the socialist proletariat of the West would be a great and even essential assistance to the working masses of Asia in their struggle against all and any exploitation".³ Thus, an agrarian-socialist revolution in the East would be carried out by the peasants under the guidance and with the participa-

¹ See: Pak Din Shun, "The Revolutionary East and the Immediate Task of the Communist International", *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 12, p. 2159.

² *Ibid.*, p. 2158.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 2160.

tion of the proletariat of the Western countries. After that the country where such a revolution took place, would, with the support of the victorious proletariat of the West, begin gradually to move towards socialism, bypassing capitalism. The Comintern, Pak Din Shun maintained, would have to work out revolutionary methods of building socialist society, i. e., it would have to "begin drafting an economic plan for a possibly less painful transition from the agrarian to the socialist system, avoiding the excruciating period of development of private capitalism in the East".¹

Obviously, under the influence of Lenin's and Comintern's ideas the views of the Korean socialists about the national liberation movement definitely evolved in the correct direction. Yet all of them asserted that a revolution in the West was inconceivable without the victory of the liberation revolution in the East. It was a vicious circle: the peoples of the East could not defeat the imperialist colonialists without the assistance of the Western proletariat, and the latter could not win without the overthrow of imperialism in the East. Only ideal conditions could break it: namely, simultaneous revolutionary explosions in the industrialised and dependent countries. "It is necessary," wrote Pak Din Shun, "to co-ordinate action in such a way that the European proletariat would strike a blow at the head of its bourgeoisie just when the revolutionary East deals a death-dealing blow at the heart of capital."²

Nevertheless, judging by the stand of the Koreans it was clear that the Communists from neighbouring Eastern countries in Soviet Russia had undoubtedly raised the level of their political and theoretical work on problems connected with the national liberation movement. It is an interesting fact that Pak Din Shun referred to the problem of non-capitalist development of the backward countries, which Marx had raised in his time, and endeavoured to solve it in keeping with the new conditions.³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2162.

² *Ibid.*, p. 2159.

³ In Soviet Russia the question of the possibility of non-capitalist development for economically backward countries was raised as far back as 1918 by K. Troyanovsky in a programme which he drew up for the Union for the Liberation of the East. He proceeded from the assumption that following the overthrow of foreign domination

Leftist views continued to prevail among the Iranian Communists, including Abukov and Javad Zade, leading members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran who worked in Iran proper, and Sultan Zade, its representative in the Comintern. The latter made an attempt to prove, and not only at the First Congress of the Communist Party of Iran but also at the Second Congress of the Comintern, that Iran faced a socialist revolution and that it had already passed through the bourgeois-democratic stage.¹ Abukov, Javad Zade and others conducted clearly leftist activities in revolutionary Gilan. A detailed account of their work was presented on August 19, 1920 by Sh. Israfilov, an eyewitness of the Gilan Revolution. The leftist activities of these members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Iran designed to "bridle the bourgeoisie and merchants", not to mention the landowners and khans, caused the national bourgeoisie to quit the revolutionary camp, thus making it easier for the reaction to crush the revolution in Gilan.

Evidently the newspaper *The Life of Nationalities* and, particularly, the first Indian Communists headed by Roy had not discarded their leftist views.

On July 25, 1920, when the Second Congress of the Comintern was already in session, *The Life of Nationalities* published "The Manifesto of the Revolutionary Party of India. An Appeal to the British Proletariat" written and signed by M. N. Roy alone. The Manifesto listed the following basic principles of Roy's leftist concept of the national-colonial question: the struggle of the Indian people was

in Asian countries, owing to the weakness of the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie there would be no other serious social and political force capable of taking power and reorganising economic activity than the class of working people, the village and urban proletariat. He believed that the assistance of the victorious working class of the Western countries and the nature of the agrarian system based on primitive communism would make it possible for the liberated countries of the East to bypass the capitalist stage of development. [K. Troyanovsky, *The East and Revolution*, Moscow, 1918, pp. 67-68 (in Russian)].

¹ See, for example, the *Bulletin of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, No. 2, July 29, 1920, p. 1 (in Russian). Later, too, Sultan Zade continued to advocate his "leftist" views.

"rapidly acquiring the nature of a struggle for economic and social emancipation and for the elimination of all class domination". Thus India faced a social revolution and the overwhelming majority of its population did not support the movement for national independence. Proceeding from these two premises Roy, as he subsequently wrote, "disagreed with his (Lenin's—M. P.) view that the national bourgeoisie played a historically revolutionary role and therefore should be supported by the Communists".¹

"The British proletariat," the Manifesto stated, "cannot attain a final and lasting victory if its comrades in the colonies do not join its fight against the common enemy"; the circumstance that India was ruled by the most powerful imperialism "makes it almost impossible to organise the revolutionary proletariat".

By a strange coincidence the Manifesto was published on the Sunday when the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions of the Second Congress of the Comintern held a day-long session and at which Lenin disputed Roy's above-mentioned assertions.² Lenin produced convincing arguments proving that his opponent's orientation towards a socialist revolution in Asian countries was both unfounded and premature. He also emphasised that there was nothing to substantiate Roy's claim that "the future of the West depends exclusively on the level of development and the strength of the revolutionary movement in the Eastern countries".³ Speaking about India to which Roy referred in

¹ M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, p. 355.

² See: *Bulletin of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, No. 1, July 27, 1920, p. 2; *The Life of Nationalities*, July 25, 1920; A. B. Reznikov, Op. cit., *Kommunist*, 1968, No. 5.

³ In connection with this quotation there may be a question as to the meaning of an assertion contained in Lenin's speech at the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East: "It is self-evident that final victory can be won only by the proletariat of all the advanced countries of the world, and we, the Russians, are beginning the work which the British, French or German proletariat will consolidate. But we see that they will not be victorious without the aid of the working people of all the oppressed colonial nations, first and foremost, of Eastern nations." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 161-62.) At the time Lenin spoke about the ultimate victory over imperialism which could come about only as a result of the interaction and unity of the

the first place, Lenin noted that it was unrealistic to think that a social revolution there was imminent, and that "Roy's views were largely unfounded" if even because so far a Communist party had not been set up in that country. This argument was all the more convincing because the Indian Marxists, as we have learned above, failed to set up a Communist party, and not only in India proper but also among the revolutionary émigrés in Soviet Russia.¹

By the middle of 1920 the international communist movement in the East still had to cope with the serious task of overcoming erroneous views about the national liberation movement. The lingering infantile disorder of "leftism" was all the more dangerous, the more obvious it became that the preparation and organisation of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism in the Eastern countries required an all-out effort by Marxist-Leninist parties whose formation was a matter of the utmost urgency.

Leftist deviations could have caused the young and still unsolid communist movement in the East to break away from the masses and thus become sectarian, i.e., to sustain a defeat even prior to decisive clashes with imperialism. The very possibility of the development of the communist movement in the East, and, consequently, the success of the struggle of the proletarian vanguard for leadership of the national liberation movement depended on whether this malady could be cured. Lenin was the first to grasp the great danger of the infantile disorder of "leftism" in the communist movement both in the West and in the East and was the first to begin a resolute struggle against it.

revolutionary anti-imperialist struggle of the proletariat of the West and the oppressed peoples of the East, inasmuch as "the vanguard alone cannot secure the transition to communism". (*Ibid.*)

¹ Nevertheless *The Life of Nationalities* which published the Manifesto mentioned that it was "drawn up by a member of the Communist Party of India Comrade Roy". The same issue carried an article by Torchinsky "The Revolution in India and Its Conditions" in which the author produced rather strange arguments in support of the thesis about the existence of a Communist Party in India. He wrote: "At present we have absolutely no knowledge either about the material or the intellectual forces of the Communist Party of India, but it is impossible to ignore the fact that it exists because the natural basis of the Communist Party of India is much too extensive." (*The Life of Nationalities*, July 25, 1920.)

His speech at the Eighth Congress of the Party at the beginning of 1919, his report at the Second All-Russia Congress of the Peoples of the East at the end of the same year, his famous book "*Left-Wing*" Communism, An Infantile Disorder written in April and May 1920, and, finally, his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions" and speeches at the Second Congress of the Comintern in July 1920 were all milestones in this direction. At the same time they were also stages of the formation and the further development of the Marxist-Leninist theory on the national-colonial revolutions.

THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL IN THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION

A. B. REZNIKOV

The Comintern made a major and lasting contribution to the strategy and tactics of the world communist movement, particularly in the national and colonial question.

THE FORMULATION OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE COMINTERN'S EASTERN POLICY

The Comintern brought the national and colonial question to the forefront already at its First Congress which took place in March 1919. The Congress decisions on this issue disclosed the basic difference between the attitude of the Comintern and the Second International towards the colonies and the oppressed peoples.

The Bern Conference of the Social-Democratic leaders which took place a month before the First Congress of the Comintern and was an attempt to revive the Second International, adopted a resolution tabled by Kautsky that, in effect, asserted imperialism's allegedly progressive role in the colonies. The First Congress of the Comintern in a resolution "On the Attitude to the 'Socialist' Trends and the Bern Conference" observed: "In the colonial question the Bern Conference is clearly floating in the mainstream of the liberal-bourgeois colonial policy which justifies the exploitation and enslavement of the colonies by the imperialist bourgeoisie and merely seeks to cover it up with humanitarian-philanthropic phraseology. The Bern Conference showed that it thoroughly forgot the parole 'Get out of the colonies'."¹

¹ Der I. und II. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale, Berlin, 1959, S. 98.

The international revolutionary proletariat resolutely condemned imperialist oppression in the colonies. "Never did capitalist rule show itself more shameless, never was the truth of colonial slavery brought into such sharp relief," stated the *Manifesto* of the Communist International. At the same time the Comintern noted the unprecedented upsurge of the liberation movement in the colonies and pointed out the significance of "bloody street battles" in Ireland, the "insurrection of the colonial slaves" in Annam and Madagascar, the continuous revolutionary movement in India, and said: "In the more advanced colonies the battle goes on not only under the flag of national liberation, but it assumes also an open and outspoken social character." As soon as it was founded the Comintern extended a hand of fraternal friendship to the oppressed peoples. The *Manifesto* said: "Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia! The hour of triumph of the Proletarian Dictatorship of Europe will also be the hour of your liberation!" The Comintern *Manifesto* proclaimed the establishment of a world-wide organisation of the proletariat on the basis of revolutionary Marxism.

The Comintern maintained that the victory of the proletarian revolution in Europe would be an essential condition for the liberation and "independent existence" of the peoples of the colonies. At the same time key theoretical conclusions about the political struggle of the Eastern peoples and their involvement in the world anti-imperialist revolutionary movement, which was rapidly developing following the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, were only just being formulated. Subjecting these processes to a scientific analysis and generalisation, Lenin took into account the cardinal ideas put forward by the founders of scientific socialism which he developed as applied to the imperialist epoch: the Communists had to raise and solve the national and colonial question in close interrelation with the international interests of the proletariat's class struggle aimed at eliminating all forms of oppression, including national oppression, under certain conditions the national liberation movement can become a powerful ally of the revolutionary proletariat; the liberation struggle is consistent with the interests of both the nation fighting against oppression and of the proletariat of the oppressor nation itself ("no nation

can be free if it oppresses other nations"); underestimation of the significance of the national liberation struggle weakens the proletariat's position and is frequently rooted in nationalism.

Towards the end of the 1860s Marx and Engels had already formed the opinion that the liberation of colonial Ireland was an indispensable precondition for the successful development of the revolutionary movement in the metropolitan country and the whole of Europe. This was an extremely important conclusion. It refuted what was regarded as an immutable principle, namely, the thesis that a proletarian revolution in the metropolitan countries was the sole road leading to the political independence of the colonies. Marx and Engels did not extend their new conclusion to the entire colonial world which was in a state of political slumber at the time. Lenin did this in the new, imperialist conditions, and particularly after the October Revolution when the colonies and semi-colonies launched an active political struggle for independence.

Marx advanced the idea that economically backward countries could bypass the capitalist stage in their development. The first phase of this development would be a popular (but so far not a proletarian) revolution in a backward country which would have the assistance of the victorious proletariat of the European countries where the socialist revolution has already been accomplished.¹ Under 19th-century conditions it was naturally impossible not only to solve, but even to formulate political problems connected with non-capitalist development, its leading forces, the links these forces may have with the nationalist ideology and their reliance upon mass organisations of working people. The same refers to the problems bearing on the relation of countries taking the road of non-capitalist development vis-à-vis the capitalist and socialist systems. It was Lenin who rendered a historic service by scientifically formulating and elaborating these issues.

The theoretical study of the national and colonial question which Lenin carried out on the eve and in the course

¹ See: K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 291-94; Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 32, S. 659; Vol. 35, pp. 164-65.

of the First World War became the foundation for framing the strategy and tactics of the world communist movement in this field. The decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern (July and August 1920) were of the utmost significance.¹ The Congress met in the period of rapid development of national liberation movements in the East, and was attended by representatives of Marxist parties and groups from India, Indonesia, Iran, China, Korea, Turkey and some other Eastern countries. Lenin delivered a report on the national and colonial question.

On the eve of the Congress *The Communist International* journal published Lenin's "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions". In this basic document Lenin emphasised that policy should be based "not on abstract and formal principles but, first, on a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions; second, on a clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes, of working and exploited people, and the general concept of national interests as a whole, which implies the interests of the ruling class; third, on an equally clear distinction between the oppressed, dependent and subject nations and the oppressing, exploiting and sovereign nations".²

After the Great October Socialist Revolution, the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against Soviet Russia, which rallied to its side the movement of the advanced workers and the national liberation movements of the imperialist-oppressed peoples, became the central issue of political developments. Owing to the very fact that the world bourgeoisie was fighting against it, the proletarian dictatorship in Russia began to acquire a clearly defined tendency to turn from a national into an international force. Under these circumstances, as Lenin emphasised, the main objective of the policy of the communist movement on the national and colonial questions was the achievement of "a closer union of the proletarians and the working masses of all nations and countries for a joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the landowners

¹ See: *The Communist International. Documents*, pp. 126-32 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 145, 146.

and the bourgeoisie" and the implementation in various relevant forms of "the closest alliance, with Soviet Russia, of all the national and colonial liberation movements".¹

Lenin drew the Comintern's attention to the need to support the anti-imperialist struggle of bourgeois-democratic forces in the colonies and dependencies. At the same time he emphasised that it was essential under all circumstances to "uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form".²

Lenin's fundamental theoretical, programme and tactical conclusions concerning the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples, which he formulated with account for the new correlation of world forces following the victory of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, found their concentrated expression in the documents on the national and colonial questions he drew up for the Second Congress of the International ("Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", his speech in the commission with these issues and the report delivered in its behalf, his editing of the draft *Supplementary Theses* by the Indian Communist M. N. Roy) and in some of his works.

Lenin proceeded from the assumption that Communists in the oppressed countries should and, under certain circumstances, could become the vanguard in the struggle for national liberation. He supported anti-imperialist nationalism, although he was clearly aware of the basically limited nature of bourgeois nationalism and its tendency towards compromise and relentlessly fought against its reactionary manifestations. Maintaining that it was crucial for the Communists to propagate internationalist ideas, he pointed out that the awakening of national awareness of the oppressed peoples played a progressive role and underscored that a revolutionary and nationalist East was a steadily developing anti-imperialist force. He viewed the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement (of the peasants, in the first place) in the backward countries as an ally of the world proletariat.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on National and Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 146.

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

When he put forward the slogan of supporting the truly revolutionary bourgeois-democratic forces in the colonies with the communist elements retaining their organisational and ideological independence, he in effect, took the first step in creating a united anti-imperialist front, and vigorously upheld this idea. The substitution of the term "bourgeois-democratic" by the term "national-revolutionary" in the theses of the Congress amounted to a further elaboration of this premise. Saying that part of the bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries was inclined to compromise with imperialism, Lenin stressed that there could be an alliance of the communist and bourgeois-democratic movement only if the non-proletarian forces which the Communists would support would be truly revolutionary. By doing so he moved into the forefront an idea of immense theoretical and practical significance: in the epoch of socialist revolutions the national liberation movement was by no means a thing of the past and did not acquire a reactionary nature. On the contrary, the new conditions enabled it to participate in revolutionary activity together with the international working-class and communist movement.

The experience of revolutionary struggle fully confirmed this conclusion and showed that its underestimation could cause great harm. Today this conclusion is accepted as a matter of course. But it was a major scientific discovery when it was first formulated, and in 1920 Lenin had vigorously to defend his point of view against those who thought that the national liberation movement had allegedly exhausted its revolutionary potential.

On the other hand, Lenin called for a "determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries."¹ Later, describing the parties which could be set up in the underdeveloped countries, Lenin pointed out, for example, that in a country such as Mongolia "the revolutionaries will have to put in a great deal of work in developing state, economic and cultural activities before the herdsman elements become a proletarian mass, which may eventually help to 'transform' the People's Revolutionary

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Party into a Communist Party. A mere change of sign-boards is harmful and dangerous".¹

He did not believe that the backward countries could take the non-capitalist road of development only with the assumption of power by the Communist parties. The slogan calling for the establishment of Soviets in the Eastern countries was not in the least a demand for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, rather it was a question of peasant Soviets, i.e., of non-proletarian organs of power in terms of their class nature.

The task which faced the communist elements in the oppressed countries, according to Lenin, was to organise revolutionary parties which were "communist not only in name"² and which would be able to establish links between the exploited working masses of these countries and the world proletariat, "to arouse the working masses to revolutionary activity, to independent action and to organisation, regardless of the level they have reached; to translate the true communist doctrine, which was intended for the Communists of the more advanced countries, into the language of every people: to carry out those practical tasks which must be carried out immediately, and to join the proletarians of other countries in a common struggle".³ He considered that the Communists of the East would have to base themselves "on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification".⁴ Furthermore, he attached the utmost significance to the union of the national liberation movement and the international struggle of the proletariat, which he characterised as "the only ally of all the hundreds of millions of the working and exploited peoples of the East",⁵ and pointed out: "Our Soviet Republic must now muster all the awakening peoples of the East and, to-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Talk with a Delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 361.

² V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 150.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 162.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

gether with them, wage a struggle against international imperialism." ¹

The slogan "Workers of all countries, unite!", which Lenin considered to be correct because "we now stand, not only as representatives of the proletarians of all countries but as representatives of the oppressed peoples as well",² reflected his attitude towards the national liberation movement as one of the elements of the world revolutionary process.

Advising the Communists that they had to make a correct class assessment of the national liberation movements, Lenin observed that "the majority of the Eastern peoples are typical representatives of the working people — not workers who have passed through the school of capitalist factories, but typical representatives of the working and exploited peasant masses who are victims of medieval oppression".³ He pointed out the importance of using the experience of Russia's victorious proletariat, which, "uniting with the vast diffuse mass of working peasants", put an end to medieval oppression.⁴

In generalising Russia's experience, Lenin arrived at the conclusion that a vast mass of working people turns towards the proletariat as it extends the general democratic gains of the revolution. In his opinion the task which faced the Communists of the East was similar to that which the proletariat of Russia and its Communist Party fulfilled (but on a greater scale), the task of uniting the working masses of the backward countries for the struggle against imperialism and medieval oppression. Referring to the Marxist teaching on the Communists' historical mission, Lenin made it clear that from the very beginning they had to wage a struggle in order to draw the working masses in the colonies into a united front with the proletariat of the developed

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

² V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Activists of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B.), December 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 453.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 161.

⁴ *Ibid.*

countries. And this, as history showed, proved to be the only correct tactic.

These fundamental theoretical and tactical conclusions which Lenin submitted to the Second Congress of the Comintern in a generalised form elicited sharp objections from the leftist doctrinaires. Serrati, a delegate of the Italian socialists, for instance, urged the Congress to reject Lenin's thesis about using the democratic national bourgeoisie as an ally of the proletariat in the struggle against imperialism. "The movement for national liberation", he said, "can be revolutionary only when the working class maintains its own class lines.... Only by means of a proletarian revolution and through the Soviet regime can the subject nations obtain their freedom. This cannot be done by temporary alliances of the Communists with the bourgeois parties called nationalist revolutionists."¹

Initially, Lenin's position did not win the support of some representatives of the emergent communist movement in the Eastern countries either. In the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions of the Second Congress Lenin's conclusions were counterposed by a system of views formulated by the Indian Communist M. N. Roy which he expounded in the first draft of his *Supplementary Theses* and in his statement at the committee sittings. In general outline Roy's concept was as follows.

He contended that the national democratic movement did not reflect the aspirations of the masses: it did not have their backing and its leaders had forfeited the trust of the working people; this movement stood in opposition to the anti-capitalist movement of the workers and poor peasants; the combined development of these movements was out of the question; the nationalism of the oppressed peoples ("national spirit") was not a revolutionary force; the national democratic movement could not be successful because it increasingly lost the support of the masses: consequently it was inexpedient for the Communists to support "the colonial bourgeois-democratic movement".

Since national bourgeois leaders were becoming more and

¹ *The Second Congress of the Communist International. Proceedings, Moscow, 1920, p. 154.*

more isolated from the masses, Roy argued, the way was paved for the Communists of the oppressed countries to assume the leadership of the mass movement, and in most of these countries conditions were ripe for the hegemony of the working class and the Communist party; in view of the non-existence or weakness of the proletariat, a Communist party could be formed out of elements of the oppressed peasantry; under the guidance of local Communist parties standing in opposition to "bourgeois-nationalist democrats" the peoples would cast off the imperialist yoke and simultaneously prevent the development of local capitalism; it was not necessary for the colonial peoples to pass through the "bourgeois-democratic stage". What Roy had in mind was not the stage of bourgeois-democratic reforms, but the stage of the political leadership of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal non-proletarian forces. Objectively speaking, he implied that the task of the Communist parties in the colonies was a direct struggle for power.

"Comrade Roy," stated the concise minutes of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions, "believes it is necessary to delete from Article II of the Theses the paragraph which deals with the need for all Communist parties to assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in the Eastern countries. The Communist International should assist exclusively the formation and development of the communist movement in India, and the Communist Party of India should concentrate wholly on organising the broad masses for the struggle for the latter's interests."

"Comrade Roy defends the idea that the future of the revolutionary movement in Europe wholly depends on the course of the revolution in the East. Without the triumph of the revolution in the Eastern countries the communist movement in the West may peter out. World capitalism draws its main resources and profits from the colonies, chiefly in Asia. As a last resort European capitalists may hand over the entire surplus value to the workers thus winning them over to their side and killing their revolutionary ambitions. The capitalists on their part will continue to exploit Asia with the help of the proletariat. This outcome would have been extremely advantageous for the capitalists. Consequently it is necessary to channel all efforts

into the stimulation and development of the revolutionary movement in the East and to accept the basic thesis that the future of world communism depends on the triumph of communism in the East."

Further on, the document said: "Comrade Lenin ... questioned Comrade Roy's point of view. In Russia we supported the liberal liberation movement during the action against tsarism. Indian Communists are obliged to support the bourgeois-democratic movement without merging with it. Comrade Roy goes too far when he asserts that the future of the West depends exclusively on the level of development and the strength of the revolutionary movement in the Eastern countries. Although there are five million proletarians and 37 million landless peasants in India, Indian Communists have so far failed to form a Communist party in the country, and this alone makes Comrade Roy's views unsubstantiated to a considerable degree."¹

In his speech Roy made believe that by exploiting the colonies imperialism would be able to turn the Western proletariat—the entire proletariat and not merely a stratum of the worker aristocracy—into its ally. The assertion that by relying on their colonial resources European colonialists may turn over the "entire surplus value" to the workers of the metropolitan countries, was basically wrong. It was also extremely harmful, for it counterposed the proletariat and all the working people of the East to their ally—the working class of the capitalist West. Basing himself on a

¹ *The Bulletin of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, 1920, No. 1, pp. 1-2 (in Russian).

It should be mentioned that for some time a concept was in circulation according to which Lenin's theses were allegedly intended only for the extremely backward countries while Roy's theses, whose significance was purportedly independent, interpreted the national and colonial question as relevant to the more developed dependencies and colonies. It is clear from Lenin's above-mentioned speech to the Commission that the tactic of the united anti-imperialist front upon which he insisted was intended for those colonies where capitalist development by 1920 was at a level which many former colonies have yet to attain in our time. Furthermore, in a speech at a plenary meeting of the Congress on July 26, 1920, Lenin made the point that it was a question of "oppressed nations", "backward countries", "oppressed peoples", "colonial countries", "countries with pre-capitalist relations" and "all colonies and backward countries".

false premise Roy drew the conclusion that the future of world communism depended exclusively on the triumph of communism in the East.

Lenin approached the issue from totally different positions. He attached a great deal of importance to an alliance of the proletarians of all countries and oppressed peoples, and held that the establishment of a united front of these forces was indispensable for victory over imperialism. He set forth a priority goal of consolidating the movements of politically aware workers of all countries and of all national liberation movements around the world's first socialist country. Lenin said that Roy went "too far" in his assessment of the level of the revolutionary movement in the Eastern countries. This was an exceptionally precise definition. Without belittling the significance of the revolutionary movement in the East it clearly conveyed the idea that this movement should not be absolutised as the only force in the struggle against imperialism.

Resolutely upholding the principle of proletarian internationalism, Lenin emphasised that the active participation of the proletariat of the developed and oppressed countries in a united anti-imperialist front was absolutely essential and that these two forces should group themselves around the country of the victorious proletariat. "The socialist revolution," he wrote, "will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie—no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism."¹ Comparing this statement with the assessment contained in his speech to the Commission of the Second Congress it becomes manifest that the leader of the world proletariat did not consider the struggle against imperialism as chiefly "Western" or chiefly "Eastern". He viewed it as an integral revolutionary process with the international working class and Soviet Russia in the vanguard.

Lenin was the first to point out the significance of the political awakening of the oppressed and exploited masses in the East, and the new, "Eastern route" which was opening

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 159.

before the world revolution alongside its "Western route". He was also the first to indicate the danger of proclaiming the new route to be in essence the only one. For, as he wrote several months before the Second Congress, "Any truth, if 'overdone' (as Dietzgen Senior put it), if exaggerated, or if carried beyond the limits of its actual applicability can be reduced to an absurdity, and is even bound to become an absurdity under these conditions."¹

The system of views known as "Roy's concept" did not appear by accident. Similar ideas were fairly widespread in the young communist movement, and Roy simply formulated them more precisely. The explanation was to be found in the concrete historical situation which arose in the colonies and semi-colonies after the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, and in some of the features of the formation of the communist movement in them.

At the time the national liberation struggle in the East had already acquired great scope and there was a considerable upsurge in the class struggle of the workers and peasants. The ideas of the October Revolution had an enormous revolutionising impact on the progressive forces in the East where a communist vanguard began to emerge and develop both ideologically and organisationally.²

At the same time many prominent figures joining the emergent Communist parties and groups came from the ranks of revolutionary nationalism. In view of the inconsis-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 62.

² In the period from 1917 to 1920 the wave of national liberation actions rose higher and higher. The whole of India was in the grip of a mass anti-imperialist movement; an anti-imperialist uprising took place in Egypt in 1919; the masses in Syria and the Lebanon were up in arms against the French colonialists; between 1917 and 1920 Iraq was shaken by anti-British actions; in 1919 an all-China anti-imperialist May 4 Movement unfolded in divided and semi-colonial China with the Chinese proletariat playing an active role. The same year an uprising flared up and was brutally suppressed in Korea, a colony of Japanese imperialism. Britain's refusal to recognise Afghanistan's independence resulted in the war of the Afghan people for independence. In 1921 Soviet Russia was the first country to recognise independent Afghanistan. The Turkish people waged a war of liberation against the imperialists of the Entente. The masses in Iran began a struggle against the fettering Anglo-Iranian Treaty of 1919. In Indonesia the popular movement, headed

tent policy that was pursued by national bourgeois elements, the more determined revolutionary nationalists gained the impression that national liberation movements headed by the local propertied classes had absolutely no prospects. As a result they became convinced that political independence could be achieved only through a socialist revolution, which was the direct objective of the Communist parties from the very outset. Turning to Marxism under the influence of their anti-imperialist aspirations and at the same time being unprepared to accept Marxism as a scientific system of views, these people, of whom Roy was a typical representative, were frequently powerless to cast off the burden of their former petty-bourgeois ideology. On top of that some of the leaders of the young communist movement believed that

at the time by the national revolutionary organisation Sarekat Islam, against the Dutch enslavers gained in scope.

The upsurge in the anti-imperialist struggle created favourable conditions for the rise and the organisational development of the communist movement in the East.

A Marxist trend headed by professors Li Ta-chao and Chen Tu-hsiu gradually took shape in the circles of the revolutionary democratic intelligentsia in China in 1920. Little by little those groups broadened their influence in labour unions. In journals which were close to Marxist positions they told the Chinese people the truth about life in Soviet Russia and published translations of works by Marx, Engels and Lenin. As early as July 1918 Li Ta-chao wrote in the *Yenchi* journal: "The Russian revolution marks a change in the consciousness not only of the Russians but of the whole of humanity of the 20th century.... We should proudly welcome the Russian revolution as the light of a new world civilisation." On July 1, 1921, the First Congress of Chinese Communists convened in Shanghai. In Korea the first Marxist groups were formed in the centres of the labour movement in 1919. An important part in the formation of the Vietnamese communist movement was played by revolutionary émigré circles which became committed to Marxism in France. In Indonesia the revolutionary Social-Democratic League in which class conscious workers who had moved towards Marxism from revolutionary nationalism were gaining ever stronger positions, decided to rename this organisation at its Congress in Semarang in May 1920. That was how the Indonesian Communist Party came into being. The first Marxist circles were set up in India, too, where there was an unprecedented upsurge of the working-class movement in 1920. Communist groups began to appear in Turkey and in 1920 the Communist Party of Turkey held its constituent congress. In June 1920 the Iranian Communist Party held its First Congress. The young Communist parties of the East acceded to the Comintern.

since communism was the embodiment of the ideals entertained by the working people, a mere proclamation of its basic principles would win over hundreds of millions of people whose interests it objectively expressed.

At the time the communist movement in the West was also suffering from the infantile disorder of "leftism". The basic error of the "leftists" both in the West and in the East was that they regarded "their wishes and their ideological and political attitude as an objective reality" and believed that what they had already surmounted was surmounted by the masses, too. Quite often the experience of the Bolshevik Party was studied and spread in a one-sided manner. The "leftists" in the West concentrated their attention wholly on the fact that the Bolsheviks had accomplished the revolution in a determined struggle against petty-bourgeois parties, while the "leftists" in the East on that in Russia the liberal bourgeoisie turned into a frankly counter-revolutionary force and that democratic transformations there became possible only as a result of the victory of the socialist revolution.

Lenin's book *"Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder* opened the door to the vast depository of Bolshevik experience before the Communists of all countries and, at the same time, warned them against its one-sided study and application. The Communists of the East should have devoted particular significance to Lenin's remark that in the concrete conditions of Russia the Bolsheviks did not deny support to the liberal bourgeoisie in the struggle against tsarism, and at the same time knew how to wage a relentless political and ideological struggle against bourgeois liberalism and the slightest manifestations of its influence in the working-class movement. In this work Lenin showed how the Bolshevik Party worked to win over the masses, to educate them on the basis of their own political experience, and its ability "to link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people".¹

The leader of the world proletariat opposed the mechanical

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 24-25.

transfer of the tactical line of the Bolshevik Party, which operated in an independent country where capitalism had attained medium level of development, to the colonial East, which stood at an incomparably lower stage of economic and political development. At the time, Lenin and the Comintern considered that in their work among the masses the Communists had to set up national revolutionary mass organisations of working people, "non-party organisations" which in a way would amount to having the "idea of Soviet organisation" translated into reality in pre-capitalist conditions. Lenin viewed this task as the unconditional duty of the Communist parties and those Marxist elements which were prepared to set up such parties, and insisted that the Communists should begin to work in this direction at once.

He was deeply troubled by the fact that some Communists tried to portray the national liberation movement in the colonies and dependencies as doomed to disintegration and a quick demise, and at the same time to give it a communist colouring. This in his opinion could cause the communist elements to become dissolved in the mighty democratic liberation movement. And it was with good reason that he altered the wording in the initial version of Roy's theses. The latter said that the bourgeois-democratic nature of the first stage of the revolution in the colonies "does not necessarily mean that leadership of the revolution in the colonies should be placed in the hands of bourgeois democrats". Lenin replaced the words "does not necessarily mean" with "does not at all mean". It follows that although Lenin favoured the establishment of a united front, he was against the Communists giving up the struggle for leadership of the revolution whatever the circumstances, for that would have turned them into an appendage of bourgeois democracy. But those who thought that the Communists could gain leadership of the revolution without consistently working to win over the masses and that all popular movements in colonies and dependencies were essentially communist—they merely proclaimed the hegemony of the proletariat but were in effect creating a situation in which the proletarian movement would lose its independence. Sectarians introduced the ideology of petty-bourgeois nationalism into the movement, being

oblivious of the danger and the very existence of such an ideology.

Lenin's principled and uncompromising attitude to sectarian distortions in the national and colonial questions was in effect a struggle for the formation of Communist parties in the Eastern countries which would be communist not only in name, but also in their class nature and their correct tactics corresponding to the concrete conditions and promoting close links with the oppressed masses.

The Second Congress of the Comintern rejected "leftist" sectarian doctrinairism and adopted Lenin's position in the national and colonial questions. As a result the Communists in the oppressed countries acquired a powerful ideological weapon for working out a correct strategical and tactical course in the national liberation movement.

The Third Congress of the Comintern (June-July 1921) stated in its resolution "Theses on the International Situation and the Problems of the Communist International": "The revolutionary national movement in India and in other colonies, is today an essential component part of the world revolution to the same extent as the uprising of the proletariat in the capitalist countries of the old and the new world."¹ The exceptionally important decisions taken by the Third Congress became the basis of the tactic of the united front implemented by the Comintern in both the developed capitalist and the oppressed countries.

Addressing the Third Congress Lenin said: "Much inflammable material has accumulated in capitalist countries as well as in those countries which up to now have been regarded merely as the objects and not as the subjects of history, i.e., the colonies and semi-colonies. It is quite possible, therefore, that insurrections, great battles and revolutions may break out there sooner or later, and very suddenly, too."² He constantly anticipated great battles and revolutions in the colonial East. All his works and speeches dealing with the East attest to his full combat readiness to meet these great battles equipped with a thorough knowledge of the

¹ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1921, p. 10.

² V. I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 478-79.

scientific principles of the strategy and tactics of the world socialist revolution. He noted that the "imperialist war of 1914-1918 and the Soviet power in Russia" once and for all turned the masses of the colonies and semi-colonies "into an active factor in world politics and in the revolutionary destruction of imperialism".¹

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern (November-December 1922) adopted "Theses on the Eastern Question". This was an exceptionally important document which specified Comintern's tactics in the national and colonial questions and further developed the ideas which Lenin expounded at the Second Congress. The Theses stated that since the Second Congress "the struggle against imperialist oppression in the colonies and semi-colonial countries has become considerably more acute as a consequence of the deepening postwar political and economic crises of imperialism".² The Congress noted the rapid growth of the national revolutionary movement in India, Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, China and Korea, and underscored the significance of the formation of Communist parties in the Eastern countries. "While being completely aware that the will of a nation for political independence in varying historical conditions can be expressed by the most diverse classes, the Communist International supports all national revolutionary movements against imperialism. At the same time it does not lose sight of the fact that only a consistent revolutionary line of policy based on the active support of the masses, and the unreserved break with all advocates of compromise with imperialism in the interests of maintaining class domination, can lead the oppressed masses to victory."³

The Congress made the point that the proletariat of the East had to put in a lot of work to educate itself and closely allied social classes in order to be prepared for the role of political leader. "The refusal of the Communists in the colonies to participate against imperialist oppression on the pretext of alleged 'defence' of independent class interest, is opportunism of the worst kind calculated only to discredit

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 454-55.

² *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, London, 1922, p. 53.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

the proletarian revolution in the East. Not less harmful must be recognised the attempt to isolate oneself from the immediate and everyday interests of the working class for the sake of 'national unity' or 'civil peace' with bourgeois democracy."¹ The Congress arrived at the conclusion that the Communist parties in the East, "which are still in a more or less embryonic stage must take part in every movement that gives them access to the masses",² that the working class in the colonies and semi-colonies could fulfil the role of revolutionary leader only by consistently fighting imperialism, and that the economic and political organisation of the working class extended the revolutionary scope of this struggle.

The "Theses on the Eastern Question" clearly defined the close interconnection of the class and national tasks of the proletariat in the oppressed countries. These tasks were by no means counterposed to each other. On the contrary, they were mutually supplementary.

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern proclaimed the slogan of great historic importance, that of a united anti-imperialist front. The tactics of a united anti-imperialist front in the East was directly connected with the slogan of a united working-class front in the West which it also put forward. These were different aspects of a single tactic designed to enable the proletariat to achieve hegemony and the Communist party to rise to leadership of the revolutionary process through a determined everyday struggle within the framework of a united front. This did not mean, however, that in order to be accepted into the united front a political organisation had to recognise this hegemony. The struggle for the united anti-imperialist front, as the Congress pointed out, would "facilitate the exposure of the wavering and hesitation of certain bourgeois nationalist groups". The Congress also noted: "The labour movement in the colonies and semi-colonial countries must first of all secure for itself the position of an independent factor in the common Anti-Imperialist Front." Special importance was attached to the need to struggle with the utmost determination "for a most democratic political regime, in order to undermine the power

¹ *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, p. 58.

² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

of the most politically and socially reactionary elements and preserve the freedom of organisation for the toilers in their struggle for their class interests".¹

THE COMINTERN'S STRUGGLE FOR A UNITED ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT (1923-1928)

The period between 1923 and 1928, i.e., between the Fourth and the Sixth congresses of the Comintern, was marked by a fresh upsurge in the struggle of the masses.

A wave of liberation struggle also swept across many countries whose peoples in the first years following the October Socialist Revolution were only beginning to awaken to political activity. Moroccan tribes who established the Rif Republic, an anti-colonial state that existed until May 1926, continued to fight against the Spanish and French colonialists; the people of Libya fiercely resisted the Italian fascist colonialists; in Syria an anti-imperialist uprising which developed into protracted guerrilla war against the French occupying forces flared up in 1925. It was a national anti-imperialist movement which the French imperialists suppressed with the help of military force and deals with the local bourgeois-landlord circles. In 1923, the British under pressure of a mass movement in Egypt had to introduce a constitution. But the inconsistent and frequently capitulatory policy of the bourgeois Wafd Party fettered the mass movement in that country. In Turkey, the nationalist People's Party which had introduced a series of anti-feudal social and economic reforms and at the same time harshly put down the independent actions of the workers and peasants, was consolidating its authority. In India the mass anti-imperialist movement stepped up its activity in the last years of the period of the partial stabilisation of capitalism. In 1927 the Indian National Congress for the first time demanded full independence for India. Communist-led anti-imperialist uprisings erupted in Indonesia in 1926-1927. In China the upsurge of the national movement which began in the summer of 1925 developed into a national anti-imperialist revolution.

The formation of the communist movement in the East

¹ *Resolutions and Theses...*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 59, 60.

which was a direct result of the enhanced political and organisational maturity of the working-class movement, continued in the period of the temporary partial stabilisation of capitalism. In April 1925 the Korean Communist Party and in December 1925 the Communist Party of India held their constituent congresses; that year the first Marxist organisations were set up in Indochina, and the Communist Party of Indonesia continued to increase its influence on the masses until the defeat of the 1926-1927 insurrection.

In that period most of the Communist parties of the East were small groups of revolutionary fighters. By November 1925, for instance, there were 3,000 Communists in China and about 1,000 in India (in eight groups which at the time did not comprise a united party), 300 in Turkey, a mere 25 or 30 in Japan and 20 in the Lebanon. In Tunisia and Algeria the communist vanguard was made up of sections of the French Communist Party seeking contact with the national revolutionary movement. In Syria a small group of local Communists managed to set up links with the liberation movement of the Druzes.

The Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) took steps to secure the consistent implementation of the decisions on the national and colonial question which were adopted at the Second, Third and Fourth Congresses.

Immediately after the Second Congress of the Comintern, which defined the basic principles of the organisations's policy in the national and colonial question, the ECCI took practical measures to carry out the course charted by the Congress. A good idea of the ECCI's stand on this issue may be gathered from its attitude to the communist and the national liberation movements in Indonesia and China.

The ECCI emphasised time and again that it was both expedient and necessary for the Indonesian Communists to participate in nationalist revolutionary organisations, above all in the Sarekat Islam, an anti-imperialist democratic organisation which was still influential among the masses. Part of the Indonesian Communists, however, opposed this tactic.

In early 1923 the Presidium of the Executive Committee discussed a letter the ECCI was sending to the leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party. This document underscored the anti-imperialist nature of the national revolution-

ary movements in the Eastern countries. The ECCI said that it was forwarding another letter through the Communist Party of Indonesia to the prominent leader of Sarekat Islam U. S. Chokroaminoto. "You are well aware what great importance we attach to the Sarekat Islam movement. There is no need to dwell upon it, for our party wanted to co-operate with Sarekat Islam from the very beginning. The Third International is very much interested in this movement. . . . The difficulties which two or three leaders of Sarekat Islam will create will be insignificant compared with what we stand to gain by winning over the masses of Sarekat Islam." In its letter to Chokroaminoto the ECCI noted that "the nationalist movement in Indonesia is not a movement of local capitalists" and said that the Sarekat Islam often put forward class demands, particularly beginning with March 1921 when its congress formulated slogans demanding the return of all land to the peasants, the introduction of a "universal right" to factories and mines and the establishment of workers' control. The ECCI emphasised that the Second Congress of the Comintern voted to assist and support the struggle for the liberation of the colonies and semi-colonial countries and that the Comintern was carrying out this decision. When the Entente tried to turn Turkey into a colony like India, the ECCI went on, "Soviet Russia led by the Communist Party, a detachment of the Communist International, was the only European country which helped Turkey not only in words, but with money and weapons". The ECCI further said that "this alliance met with very considerable approval on the part of the nationalists and Muslims in Asia". The ECCI regarded Sarekat Islam "more than just a nationalist movement". "We know that our cause does not fully coincide with the cause of Sarekat Islam." But this circumstance should not stand in the way of a joint anti-imperialist struggle, for "the unity of the capitalists of the world should be countered by the unity of the nationalists and revolutionary Muslims of the whole world". The ECCI indicated in the letter that its objective was to establish "unity of action between Sarekat Islam and the Third International".

At the time the leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party, however, regarded this tactic as unacceptable; it severed its ties with Sarekat Islam and led away an overwhelm-

ing majority of its sections who formed Sarekat Islam Merah (Red Sarekat Islam) and then Sarekat Rakjat (People's Union), a predominantly peasant organisation. The Indonesian Communist leaders were still far from correctly understanding the role of their Party, and failed to draw a clear line between a party and its mass organisations. And there was no dividing line between the Communist Party and the Sarekat Rakjat. The Comintern advised the Indonesian Communists to turn Sarekat Rakjat into a separate national revolutionary party that would act in close contact with the Communist Party which on its part would do everything to strengthen its influence in this organisation.

By advocating the formation of national revolutionary and worker-peasant parties in the Eastern countries, the ECCI had no intention of getting them to substitute for the activity of the Communist parties. Furthermore it did not believe that because workers and peasants made up the bulk of the membership of the national revolutionary parties their leadership would necessarily pursue a worker-peasant policy. It was a question of forming mass organisations in which communist and bourgeois elements would struggle for influence.

The ECCI and its Eastern Department devoted particular attention to the question of a united front of Communists and national revolutionary forces in China. At its First Congress the CPC leadership, like the leadership of the Communist Party of Indonesia, was still a long way from correctly understanding this problem. The First Congress resolutely turned down the tactic of co-operating with other parties. "We must ... defend exclusively the interests of the proletariat and not to enter into any relations with other parties," it was stated in one of its decisions. In that period many Chinese Communists thought that the immediate task was the accomplishment of a socialist revolution. The Comintern's representatives in China noted in their reports that the Chinese Communists had no ties with the working-class and the national revolutionary movement.

H. Maring, a Dutch Communist whom the Comintern sent to China immediately after the Second Congress as a "representative of the ECCI in the countries of the Far East" and who had considerable experience of work in Sarekat Islam, maintained that the Communists should join the Kuomintang.

This tactic was a direct continuation of Lenin's policy of creating and supporting non-communist national revolutionary organisations in the East. In view of the above-mentioned reasons typical of the young communist movement of the East, the CPC leadership failed to see the advisability of this move. This was a specific form of the "infantile disorder of leftism" characteristic of many Communist parties in the East. It was only after they had acquired the experience of struggle that the CPC leadership grasped the correctness of the course recommended by the Comintern.

The decisions of the Second Congress of the CPC which adopted a resolution on forming a united front with the nationalists (i.e., the Kuomintang) were a step in this direction. "We must unite all revolutionary parties," the resolution said, "and organise a united front so as to be able by joint effort to overthrow the party of militarists and imperialists and inaugurate the rise of a genuinely democratic and independent nation." But this did not mean that the Communists had finally decided to join the Kuomintang.

On January 12, 1923, the ECCI passed the resolution "The Attitude of the Communist Party of China to the Kuomintang" which said that China's central task was a national revolution against the imperialists and their internal feudal agents, that the Kuomintang was the sole national revolutionary grouping in China, and that the working class was directly interested in the victory of the national revolution. The ECCI advised CPC members to work in the Kuomintang taking care that their work there should under no circumstances cause the CPC to lose or undermine its independence. The difficult experience (the defeat of the Peking-Hankow railwaymen's strike in February 1923) making obvious the need for mass allies, the CPC leadership finally agreed that the tactic recommended by the Comintern was correct. The Third Congress of the CPC (June 1923) defeated the opposition of the "leftists" and passed a decision consistent with the ECCI resolution of January 1923.

The Comintern, proceeding from the decisions of its Fourth Congress, maintained that the national anti-imperialist and the class goals of the proletariat by no means contradicted each other. This meant that the consolidation of the position of the Communist parties and national revolutionary

organisations of the East was in line with the immediate class interests of the proletariat. At the same time it tended to promote the development of national revolutionary movements, and paved the way for the "great battles and revolutions" which Lenin anticipated in the East. The course of events has shown that by acting as the vanguard of this movement and unconditionally preserving their class independence at the same time, the Communists have invested it with consistency and scope which in turn increased its strength. The Comintern was right when it refused to regard the Kuomintang in China or Sarekat Islam in Indonesia as ordinary bourgeois parties. And the fact that in the long run these coalition parties became dominated by bourgeois (and in China also by militarist) elements, by no means proved that that was the case from the very outset of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The Comintern based its strategy and tactics in the national and colonial question on Lenin's instruction concerning the need to establish an alliance with the "revolutionary and nationalist East". That was why when M. M. Borodin was sent to China in 1923 as a representative of the Comintern his orders were "to act in the interests of the national liberation movement in China and not to concentrate on implanting communism in China".

An important role in assisting China's revolutionary forces was played by the "Resolution on the Question of the National Liberation Movement and the Kuomintang" which was adopted in November 1923 and was typical of the Comintern's strategy and tactic in the national and colonial question at the time. The resolution impressed upon the Kuomintang that a political struggle at the top without reliance on the masses of working peasantry and broad sections of the urban population was ineffective. The central place in the resolution was occupied by the Comintern's appraisal of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People: "People's Rule" (nationalism), "People's Authority" (democracy) and "People's Livelihood" (state socialism). It interpreted nationalism as anti-imperialist nationalism and underscored the anti-capitalist aspect of the nationalism of the masses. Democracy, in its opinion, was a principle that corresponded exclusively to the interests of China's anti-imperialist

forces. The principle of state socialism could have a revolutionary impact on the masses as a principle of the nationalisation of foreign firms, enterprises, banks, railways and shipping lines. The resolution indicated the need to set up a united anti-imperialist front between the liberation movement in China and the workers' and peasants' state—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The First Congress of the Kuomintang which met in January 1924 showed that the leadership of this organisation headed by Sun Yat-sen heeded the Comintern's recommendations and believed that they could help promote the national liberation movement.

The Comintern's decisions on the Chinese question, its practical contribution to the reorganisation of the Kuomintang into a mass national party and the Soviet Union's support for Sun Yat-sen's Government represented implementation of Lenin's propositions concerning an alliance with the national revolutionary movement and of his idea of a united anti-imperialist front. The Kuomintang, where the Communists constituted the vanguard of the left forces, became a party of the anti-imperialist bloc in China. A struggle for leadership developed within this "multi-class" party between the revolutionary elements, on the one hand, and bourgeois-landowner and militarist circles, on the other. The transformation of the Kuomintang into a national party, a process actively supported by the Comintern, stirred the masses in China and played an important part in the preparation for the Great Chinese Revolution.

A great deal of attention to the national and colonial question was devoted at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern (June and July 1924).

In his report on the national and colonial question delivered at a plenary meeting of the Congress, member of the RCP(B) delegation D. Z. Manuisky said that the trend of events showed "the correctness of the lines laid down at the Second International Congress".¹ Dwelling on this thesis he noted that there was a "very rapid growth of the national and revolutionary movements in all colonial countries". He said that there were three reasons for placing the national question on the agenda of the Fifth Congress. "The first

¹ *Fifth Congress of the Communist International*, London, 1924, p. 185.

reason is because at the Second Congress ... we put forward for the first time the idea of the united revolutionary front between the proletariat and the oppressed nations and colonies. But we did not put into a concrete form (we could not do so because of lack of international experience) the methods for establishing this united revolutionary front. In the course of the four years of our fight we collected enough data and material on the question to be able to come to some general conclusion. Moreover, many mistakes were made in a number of countries by our young Communist sections in this connection. It would be, perhaps, more to the point to say that some of our sections ignored this question altogether ... Finally, during the period which has elapsed since the Second Congress an event of great political importance has taken place. I mean the establishment in Soviet Russia of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as an experiment of the solution of the national question under proletarian dictatorship in a peasant country comprising many nationalities."¹

Manuilsky said that practical experience confronted the Communists with some new aspects of the national and colonial question. In a number of countries, for instance, a tendency was observed among large masses of workers to form workers' and peasants' parties with a comparatively radical programme for the fight against imperialism. The Comintern recommended the Communists in Java "to take an active part in the work of the local workers' and peasants' party", and the Chinese Communists to join the Kuomintang, a circumstance which prompted that Party to take a more active attitude in the fight against international imperialism. Manuilsky also spoke of "the danger of ignoring the phenomena which are revolutionising the East" and of the danger for the Communists of "losing their proletarian character by collaboration with the petty-bourgeoisie".²

The report, which reflected the standpoint of the ECCI, was sharply attacked by M. N. Roy, who also protested that the Congress resolution on the ECCI report emphasised the need for the Comintern to maintain direct links with the na-

tional liberation movement in the East in order to draw the colonial peoples into an alliance with the revolutionary proletariat.

The motivation part of Roy's amendment, which was turned down by the Commission which drafted the resolution on the ECCI report, read as follows: "Bearing in mind that the bourgeois-nationalist movement in practically all the main colonies and semi-colonial countries (Egypt, India, Turkey, Persia, Dutch Indies, China and the Philippines) is not a revolutionary struggle against imperialism, and in many countries has ended in a compromise with imperialism ... the wording ought to be altered. In view of the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalism, which has refused to fight against imperialism and wishes only to exploit the local working people in alliance with imperialism, the whole burden of the struggle for liberation is shifted onto the shoulders of the workers and peasants. Therefore the anti-imperialist struggle can be successfully conducted only under the leadership of the party of the working class."

Generally speaking Roy's speech was a disguised attack on Lenin's premises in the national and colonial question which had been endorsed by the Second Congress. Roy also tried to conceal the fact that Lenin regarded some of his propositions to be unacceptable, and motivated many of his assertions which ran counter to the decisions of the Second Congress by saying that the situation in the East had allegedly undergone a radical change in the period from 1920 to 1924. He did not say, however, that he had referred to such a "change in the situation" back in 1920 too. Professing loyalty to the decisions of the Second Congress, he, nevertheless, tried to limit their application in time (alleging they could be implemented for a short period only) and in space (i.e., they could be applied only in the most backward colonies and semi-colonial countries).

As he opposed the "establishment of a direct link between the Executive Committee and the nationalists", on the grounds that the national bourgeoisie in the colonies was allegedly "separated from the masses", that Communist party's immediate task was to fill the vacant post of leader and that class contradictions were already dominating the national contradictions in the colonies, Roy did not say that

¹ *Fifth Congress of the Communist International*, p. 187.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 187-88.

Lenin had deleted similar assertions from his theses back in 1920. When claiming that the national liberation movement which had acquired "grandiose dimensions" in 1920 and 1921, was a thing of the past and had "suffered a fiasco", Roy, naturally, failed to mention that he had also spoken about the movement's bankruptcy back in 1920. This time he had to admit that it had reached "grandiose dimensions" in those years, but only to conclude that now this movement had returned to its "pure", class basis.

A system of views which the Comintern rejected in 1920 was again submitted to the Fifth Congress. Its central point was a proposition opposing an alliance with the bourgeois-democratic nationalist anti-imperialist movement rejected by Lenin and the Second Congress of the Comintern.

The Fifth Congress which also turned down this system of views made it absolutely clear that the nationalist movement in the colonies was on the upsurge in terms of its historic importance. In this connection it was necessary to note that Lenin's premises concerning the national and colonial question owed their exceptionally great, even fundamental significance, to the fact that they were designed not for a short period but for a whole historical epoch in the course of which the nationalist movement in the oppressed countries objectively retained a very substantial anti-imperialist potential. These premises determined the general direction of communist strategy and tactics towards the entire national liberation component of the world anti-imperialist revolution.

Lenin's premises were universal not because in 1920, as distinct from the later period, the colonies and semi-colonial countries were allegedly still of "one and the same type" in all respects, and neither would it be correct to think that Lenin failed to notice their dissimilarity. The fact of the matter is that Lenin examined the cardinally important question of the revolutionary anti-imperialist potentialities of the national liberation movements and in this respect all colonies and semi-colonies actually did comprise "one type" in the sense that they were imperialist-enslaved countries. It can be gathered from his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", and from his speeches at the Second Congress, that he did not at all believe that with the development of capitalism in the colonies and se-

mi-colonies, the discontent of the masses which had awakened to political activity, even if it was directly evoked by social oppression, would no longer take the form of national movements and that as class antagonisms continued to mount one colony after another would fall out of the "type" which Lenin had designated as the imperialist-oppressed countries. It should be recalled in this connection that when Lenin talked about the need for an alliance with the bourgeois democracy of the colonies, he also had in mind such a relatively developed country as India.

A draft resolution drawn up by the ECCI was submitted to the Fifth Congress of the Comintern. Its most important points were:

the Comintern recognises the need to support all forms of the anti-imperialist struggle;

at present, in some countries, India in the first place, the national movement is on the decline. This decline is advantageous to imperialism which has brought it about with methods of military suppression and concessions to the local bourgeoisie, which aggravated, once again to the advantage of imperialism, the internal contradictions of the national liberation movement; but the root causes of the contradictions between the local bourgeoisie and imperialism remain and with time they will flare up with fresh force; since the end of 1922, when the Fourth Congress took place, serious blows were delivered at imperialism in China, Turkey, Persia, Morocco and the Philippines; on the historical plane the national liberation movement in the colonies is on the upsurge;

the course of events shows that the Comintern's orientation towards linking up the proletarian movement with the national liberation movement is correct;

the task of the Communist parties in the oppressed countries is to work for the establishment of a united anti-imperialist front embracing the working class, the peasantry and revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia in the fight against imperialism and its allies—local feudalism, bureaucracy and militarism—and also to help in every way to strengthen the co-operation of the national governments of their countries with the USSR;

achievement of national independence is only a stage in the national revolution which is nothing else than a process of the creation of a national democratic state. The proletariat is interested in the consistent introduction of democratic transformations following the attainment of national independence; therefore its support for the national revolutionary bourgeoisie should depend on how determined it is to fight for political independence of the country, for the abolition of its economic enslavement and the completion of the democratic revolution. It is most important that this criterion should be used to define the extent and the conditions of the proletariat's support for the national bourgeoisie during the national revolution. Mistakes in this matter may lead the Communists to opportunism in their attitude to the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and to isolation from the national liberation movement, on the other;

the Communists should inculcate the awareness of independent class goals among the workers; the Communists should fight for the everyday interests of the workers; only in this way the Communist parties will be able to become the leaders of the working class; it is necessary to fight against the danger of young and weak communist organisations losing their identity in the general stream of the national liberation movement;

the Communist parties working in alliance with the national revolutionary forces must resolutely combat nationalism in their own ranks;

the Communist parties in the colonial and semi-colonial countries should bring the broad peasant masses under their influence; they should draw the peasantry into the national revolution not only by offering the slogan of independence, but also by supporting specifically peasant demands;

in order to bring national revolutionary elements into the orbit of communist influence it is necessary to work for the formation of large-scale worker-peasant or people's revolutionary organisations (parties) with the indispensable condition that the Communist parties maintain their independence;

the Communist parties of metropolitan countries should demand the right to self-determination up to and including secession for the colonies, explain to the proletarians of

their countries that liberation of the colonial peoples fully conforms to the class interests of the workers in the metropolitan countries, and demand the legalisation of the labour and communist movement in the colonies;

the Communist parties in the colonies and semi-colonial countries have to shoulder the specific tasks of the anti-imperialist struggle, of bringing all revolutionary anti-imperialist forces into a united front, strengthening the communist influence in the national revolutionary organisations and upholding the independence of the communist movement.

Submitted four years after the Second Congress this draft resolution was defining communist policies in relatively changed conditions. But the diverse new factors which appeared in that period in the communist and national liberation movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries made themselves felt against the same general background that was created by the awakening to political activity of the "revolutionary and nationalist East", and at a new stage of development of the same historical tendency which inexorably guided the rising wave of nationalism of the oppressed peoples into the anti-imperialist channel.

J. V. Stalin studied the draft and on July, 31, 1924 sent his remarks to D. Z. Manuilsky in which he made the following point: "You mention differences with Roy who underscores the social aspect of the struggle in the colonies. I don't know how these differences concretely express themselves. But I should say that there are certain places in the resolution of the congress which I do not agree with precisely from the standpoint of the social aspect." Continuing, Stalin wrote: "I believe that the time has come to raise the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in the liberation struggle in the colonies such as India, whose bourgeoisie is conciliatory (with British imperialism), and victory over whom (i.e., over the conciliatory bourgeoisie) is the main condition for liberation from imperialism. A whole number of points in the resolution speak of criticising the national bourgeoisie, exposing its half-heartedness and so forth. That is not what is needed. It is necessary to smash the conciliatory national bourgeoisie, i.e., to wrest the worker and peasant masses from its influence in order to achieve genuine liberation from imperialism. Without fulfilling this prelimi-

nary task it is impossible to achieve victory over British imperialism. The basic feature of the new situation in colonies such as India, is that the national bourgeoisie (i.e., the most influential and wealthy bourgeoisie) is afraid of a revolution and prefers a compromise with foreign imperialism to the complete liberation of their country from imperialism. In order to smash this bloc it is necessary to concentrate all blows at the conciliatory national bourgeoisie and advance the slogan of the hegemony of the proletariat as the basic condition of liberation from imperialism. In other words, it is a question of preparing the proletariat for leadership of the liberation movement in colonies such as India, and to push the conciliatory national bourgeoisie out of this honorable post. The greatest shortcoming of the congress resolution on the Eastern and colonial question is that it does not take this new decisive aspect in the situation into account and lumps all the colonies together."

The Fifth Congress did not endorse the draft resolution on the national and Eastern questions, deeming that it would be expedient to resume its discussion at the next congress. The continuing struggle, however, demanded the formulation of concrete instructions and recommendations concerning the tasks confronting the Communist parties in the Eastern countries. Therefore the national and colonial question was again thoroughly discussed at the Fifth Enlarged ECCI Plenum (March-April 1925). In a resolution adopted on April 6 the Plenum evaluated the political situation in India, Indonesia and Egypt and advised the Communists in those countries on their programmes and tactics.

The Plenum pointed out that the "strengthening of the repressive policy of British imperialism against communist elements, the working-class movement and consistent nationalists, on the one hand, and the contradictions in the national movement, on the other, have temporarily weakened the organised resistance of the Indian masses against British imperialism". The resolution further said: "Believing that this state of affairs signifies neither defeat nor collapse of the national liberation movement in the country, but only a transient crisis within the existing national parties, the Plenum considers that active efforts to complete the formation of the national liberation movement on the basis of a

resolute struggle for India's independence is one of the most urgent tasks facing our Indian comrades." The Plenum recommended the Communists to continue participating in the National Congress in order to "create a mass national revolutionary party and the All-India anti-imperialist bloc", and considered that it was necessary to "make the Indian bourgeoisie wage a more determined political struggle and support all its efforts at resisting imperialism *on the basis of a united anti-imperialist front*". The Plenum held that the main task facing the Indian Communists was to "work to unite communist groups and elements into a tightly-knit party of the working class—the Communist party".

Characterising the situation in Indonesia, the Plenum noted that the colonialists had increased their repressions against the "communist elements and consistent nationalists", and that the coalescence of the national revolutionary Sarekat Rakjat organisation with the Indonesian Communist Party produced negative consequences. The leaders of the Indonesian Communist Party, the resolution said, "continued to regard the national revolutionary movement in the country from the point of view of an upsurge of the liberation movement in the period from 1919 to 1921, when the anti-imperialist struggle in the East was directly stimulated by the October Revolution in Russia and the proletarian movement in the West. At the time the future of the liberation movement in the colonies was visualised as a direct armed struggle to overthrow capitalism and establish worker and peasant power. In that period the tactics of the Communists in the East were geared to this goal. In view of Java's insular geographical position and inadequate contacts with the Communist International, some of the leading Javanese comrades until lately continued to use slogans of Soviet power for Java, slogans which failed to rally broad masses of the peasantry and the urban bourgeoisie around the national revolutionary Sarekat Rakjat Party". The Plenum emphasised that the Indonesian Communists should "immediately advance the slogan calling for the formation of an anti-imperialist bloc of all national revolutionary parties in Java". The ECCI said that since the Communist Party of Indonesia could be dissolved in the Sarekat Rakjat, the Communists needed to take steps to transform Sarekat Rakjat into an

organisationally independent national revolutionary party.

A study of these documents, all of which were of exceptional practical significance (the resolution on Indonesia, for example, was promptly dispatched to Java and became the foundation of all ECCI policy with regard to the Indonesian movement), shows the basic considerations which at the time guided the headquarters of the world communist movement as it elaborated the strategy and tactics in the national and colonial question and their main aspects.

The ECCI was fully aware that on the historical plane the national liberation movement was on the upsurge and that enormous prospects were open before it. The fact that in the preceding two or three years a lull had set in in some countries of the East was not taken as proof of the collapse of the national liberation, and this idea was vigorously rejected. At the same time the ECCI pointed out that the situation in which it seemed that an armed struggle to overthrow imperialism and establish a worker and peasant power would take place in the East, had receded into the past. The important thing was that the ECCI did not think that the relative maturity of the national bourgeoisie (India), or, on the contrary, its practical non-existence (Indonesia), stood in the way of the struggle for national independence. In working out the more effective tactics the ECCI in the first place ascertained what class guided the national liberation struggle in a given country. All its decisions were permeated with the idea that national movements had an enormous anti-imperialist potential.

The Comintern maintained the fully justified view that the oppressed and hungry masses which were rising to political activity in the East could not fail to see that the road to liberation lay through a national struggle and gradually joined it, at a different pace in different countries; at the same time the nature of the national struggle, i.e., whether it is revolutionary or reformist, mass or relatively top-level, depended on concrete conditions and, above all, on the class nature of the leadership. In its efforts to exercise the most effective influence on the historical process, the headquarters of the world communist movement evolved concrete forms of this influence.

In the first place, it focussed the attention of the Commu-

nist parties in the oppressed countries on the need to consolidate their proletarian basis and uphold the independence of the proletarian movement and the interests of the working class. It also indicated the enormous opportunities which would open before these Communist parties when they took an active part in the national liberation struggle, and underscored that, on the one hand, such a policy created the prerequisites for their subsequent transformation into the leaders of the masses, and, on the other, broadened, strengthened and revolutionised the national liberation movement thus enabling the more determined anti-imperialist groups to take over the leadership of this movement.

Enlarging upon the ideas of the Second Congress of the Comintern concerning the needs for the establishment of close links between the struggle of the world proletariat and the movement of the oppressed peoples, and the tasks that confronted the Communists of the East in this connection (the Second Congress believed that the most important of these tasks was the formation of "non-party organisations of peasants and workers"), the ECCI urged the formation of "people's revolutionary", "people's" and "worker-peasant" parties. It said that the Communists of the East had to carry on active and consistent work in these parties and at the same time unconditionally maintain full political independence. The purpose was not to turn these "bloc" parties into Communist parties, or gain leading positions in them, for that would have been unrealistic, but to transform them into political organisations of the anti-imperialist front.

These decisions amplified the ideas put forward by the Second Congress and generalised the practical experience of the Comintern and individual Communist parties in the colonies and semi-colonial countries.

Here, too, the Comintern's policy towards the liberation and communist movement in Indonesia and China exemplifies its tactical line in the national and colonial question (this time in the middle of the 1920s).

Immediately after the Fifth Plenum, the ECCI dispatched its resolution with accompanying explanations to the Indonesian Communists. "In terms of its composition and ideology," the ECCI pointed out, "Sarekat Rakjat is a petty-bourgeois organisation, and as such it should have a programme

for national liberation and not a quasi-communist programme." It went on to say: "You will be unable to guide the national liberation movement so long as you do not have a Communist party with an iron discipline and a clear, Leninist, understanding of the goals of the struggle."

The ECCI learned of the decisions of the December (1924) conference of the Communist Party of Indonesia only after its Fifth Plenum had passed a resolution on the Indonesian question. Accordingly the ECCI immediately sent a letter to the Communist Party of Indonesia criticising the decision of the conference gradually to dissolve the Sarekat Rakjat. "The experience of the international communist movement," the letter said, "has shown that there is not a single country in the world where the proletariat could expect success in its struggle without active support from the majority of the peasantry. . . . In countries where the proletariat is still poorly organised and its bulk is made up of semi-peasant elements, the peasantry occupies a very important place in the revolution. Hence it is absolutely clear that if you refuse to lead the struggle of the peasants in Indonesia against Dutch imperialists, you will hold up the revolution for many years."

Although formally agreed with the ECCI resolution, the leadership of the Communist Party of Indonesia, which was dominated by sectarian tendencies at the time, did not follow the Comintern's recommendations and continued to steer its old course. In reports to the ECCI in September 1925 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia claimed that the peasantry "has not reached the level of maturity to form political organisations", that Sarekat Rakjat was a weak organisation, for it was mainly concerned with upholding the everyday needs of the peasants, that the peasants "need purely economic organisations", that there were "basic distinctions between the interests of the workers and the peasants" and that "the political struggle is incompatible with the struggle for petty everyday demands".

In order to broaden the influence of the Communist Party of Indonesia in the national liberation movement the Central Committee deemed it expedient to set up a Bureau of National Freedom consisting of radical intellectuals. "Sarekat Rakjat," a report stated, "should turn into small peas-

ant organisations, and the Bureau of National Freedom should replace the national anti-imperialist bloc."

The ECCI criticised this attitude of the leadership of the Communist Party of Indonesia and called it erroneous.

"You write," the ECCI stated in its reply, "that 'the political struggle is incompatible with the struggle for petty everyday demands'. This standpoint is altogether erroneous. The Comintern has repeatedly condemned it and demanded that the Communists focus the most serious attention on the struggle of the workers' and peasants' masses for 'petty demands' and urged that this struggle should be linked with the struggle for political power. Comrade Lenin directed numerous speeches and articles against 'leftist follies', as he put it, and against the separation of the vanguard from the masses."

"You acknowledge the necessity to preserve your influence on the general national movement. But it is not clear why for this purpose you should wish to dissolve a popular mass national revolutionary organisation Sarekat Rakjat with its 60,000 members. In our opinion this is absolutely impermissible. Sarekat Rakjat unites all the social strata (workers, peasants and the revolutionary intelligentsia) which oppose an agreement with imperialism. This form of revolutionary bloc was not devised in offices but created by life itself. The Kuomintang in China is also a revolutionary bloc. Of course, there are bound to be differences and friction inside such a bloc organisation. They are inevitable. Our task, however, is to resolve them and not to push the organisation towards a split, to secure our influence inside it, preserving this bloc for the entire period of the joint struggle against imperialism and seeking to bring the broadest imperialist-oppressed masses into the ranks of this organisation."

"The next serious error in your letter is the incorrect idea about the mutual relations between the Party and the broad non-party organisations, and the correct idea about the forms of party leadership. Thus far Sarekat Rakjat, a large non-party organisation, was fused with the Party. Your Party was built on a non-party foundation, an absolutely impermissible form. We pointed out that this pattern was impermissible and suggested that these two organisations should

be separated. Instead, you take to the opposite extreme intending to destroy Sarekat Rakjat, the basis of the Party's influence. You are evolving a purely abstract plan according to which the Party is at the top and below it is the Bureau of National Freedom (a Bureau and not a mass organisation) with purely intelligentsia-type clubs at the bottom. But this can only undermine the Party and the national revolutionary movement.

"It is wrong to fuse a non-party organisation with a party, for 1) it delays the development of the mass organisation and 2) creates the danger of the party being absorbed by the non-party organisation. Everywhere our party should unite the conscious vanguard of the proletariat and the deprived peasantry and revolutionary intelligentsia which follow it. Where the party is persecuted by imperialism it inevitably will be a clandestine and therefore a numerically small organisation. Sarekat Rakjat, on the contrary, should unite as best it can the entire mass of the revolutionary classes. . . . Such is the meaning of our decisions and we continue to insist on them. We are firmly convinced that mutual misunderstanding was due to the great distance separating us, and your underground status which deprives you of the possibility of becoming fully acquainted with the text of the Comintern resolution and with all available communist literature."

The leadership of the Communist Party of Indonesia, however, appraised the Comintern's advice as "superfluous instructions". When it switched to "ultra-revolutionary" positions, it did not visualise that the policy of dissolving the national revolutionary Sarekat Rakjat would have such dire consequences for the Party. The Party leadership took the despair aroused by the sharp increase of repressions by the Dutch colonialists in 1926 for the genuine readiness of the masses to begin action.

In the summer of 1926 a delegation from the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party came to the Comintern. Upon arriving in Moscow it informed the ECCI that at the end of 1925 members of the Central Committee representing the most important sections of the Party, the Sarekat Rakjat organisation and several trade unions held a conference in Solo in Central Java. This conference reached the

following conclusion: "The Party feels itself objectively strong enough to respond to reaction with a powerful resistance and uprising." The delegation told the ECCI that the Communist Party of Indonesia had 8,000 members, and Sarekat Rakjat 101,000, and that the Party controlled nine trade union centres uniting 23,000 industrial and office workers.

The Indonesian delegation was received at the ECCI on July 22. ECCI representatives were most concerned about the question whether the revolutionary situation in Indonesia actually existed. They also wanted to know the political programme of the brewing insurrection. The latter point was unclear even to the delegation itself. "The entire population will follow us, and after that we'll draw up a political programme," the delegates said. "Of course when the time comes and if we are ready we shall assume power." They believed that the victory of the insurrection was assured.

J. V. Stalin (a member of the ECCI) received the representatives of the CC of the Communist Party of Indonesia on August 9, 1926. "The present situation," the delegates told him, "the strengthening of government repressions, the disastrous economic situation of the masses and unemployment among the intelligentsia create very favourable conditions for a mass action which will be supported by all sections of the population."

Stalin's basic considerations which he set forth in the conversation were as follows: "Your industry is underdeveloped, workers are few, your Party is young, your country is a peasant one. Although there is differentiation (class—A.R.), it is inadequate. Consequently, without drawing left nationalist elements into the cause the Communist Party alone cannot at present solve the matter." He also said: "In order to become a national leader, it is not enough for a Communist Party to feel itself a leader, it is necessary that the masses should feel this, that they should see and know the Party leaders, that they should test them over the years as they perform their work, that they should know that they are not cowards—and only then will these leaders become national leaders. For this the Party has to work more or less in the open. The Communist Party, however, operates illegally, it cannot be as powerful as the comrades say, and evidently is still little known among the masses. Hence, the

Party must go through a period of work under the conditions of democratic freedoms, and it is necessary to achieve them in the first place." Stalin said that he doubted that the insurrection was fully prepared and underscored that the attempt to bypass the national democratic stage of the revolution would be a hopeless venture.

In September 1926 the delegation received the draft resolution of the ECCI on the Indonesian question, whose basic points coincided with Stalin's conclusions, and responded to it most negatively.¹

The authors of the resolution on the Indonesian question, which was adopted on September 17, took the following factors into account: "Indonesia is one of those countries where the Communist Party should evolve its tactics on the basis of a revolutionary bloc with left national elements. It has to rely, apart from the workers, also on the broad sections of the rural and peasant population and farm labourers and secure the participation of the handicraftsmen, the intelligentsia and democratic sections of the native bourgeoisie." The resolution pointed out that one of the main tasks of the Communist Party was to achieve the cohesion of all national rev-

¹ Dwelling on the causes of the defeat of the Communist Party of Indonesia at the time D. N. Aidit wrote in 1955: "The CPI leadership was not yet able to combine the general truth of Marxism-Leninism with the practice of the Indonesian revolution because they did not yet possess Marxist-Leninist theory and they did not yet have an understanding of the historical conditions and of Indonesian society, of the peculiarities of the Indonesian revolution and the laws of the Indonesian revolution. The result was that the Party did not know that the basic demand of the Indonesian people was the demand for the elimination of imperialism and feudalism and the attainment of national independence, democracy and freedom. Further, the Party leadership was not aware that in order to attain this basic demand, a broad united front had to be built of the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, based upon the alliance of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the working class. As a result of the lack of understanding of all this, there arose within the Party leadership erroneous views to the effect that 'the peasants cannot be relied upon in every action', that 'the middle classes and the educated people have already become the tools of the capitalists', that the CPI must be 'anti-all capitalism', that the CPI slogans should be 'socialism now', 'a Soviet Indonesia', 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and the like." (D. N. Aidit, *The History of the Communist Party of Indonesia*, New Delhi, 1955, pp. 10-11.)

olutionary elements in the country, build up a united national front and at the same time fully retain its own organisational and political independence. The central point in the action programme recommended by the ECCI was the demand for Indonesia's independence. This programme contained no provisions for a direct course towards an armed uprising.

Thus, an examination of the materials concerning the Comintern's policy on the Indonesian question in the mid-1920s disproves the claims that the Comintern had deviated from the Leninist principle of forming a united anti-imperialist front in that period. These materials also give the lie to the accusations of "opportunism" levelled at the ECCI by the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition. The ECCI emphasised that the liberation movement in Indonesia would attain its goal only through revolution. At the same time it pointed out that the Communist Party must engage in painstaking everyday work to ensure that the uprising is thoroughly prepared and not doomed to failure, and that in order not to lose mass support the Communist Party should not attempt to leap over the national democratic stage of the revolution.

In November 1926 the uprising against the Dutch colonialists became a reality and the Comintern organised the movement of solidarity of the proletariat and popular masses with the heroic insurgents. It exposed the butchers of the Indonesian people to the whole world, and emphasised the vanguard role played by the Communist Party of Indonesia in the struggle to liberate the country from colonial oppression. Subsequently the Comintern rendered considerable assistance to the Indonesian Communists in rebuilding the Party routed as a result of the unsuccessful uprising. On many occasions the Comintern came out in support of the non-proletarian anti-imperialist forces in Indonesia, which evinced an increasing desire to establish a united front with the Communists as the revolutionary-democratic wing consolidated its positions and extended its influence in the country.

The Comintern attached exceptionally great attention, particularly between 1925 and 1927, to the problems of the Chinese revolution. Its stand on this issue was most fully defined in the decisions of the enlarged Seventh (November-December 1926) and Eighth (May 1927) plenums of the

ECCL. It came under systematic and frenzied attacks by the opposition headed by Trotsky and Zinoviev. The opposition used the question of the Chinese revolution as a pretext and a field for attacking the general line of the RCP(B). Later the opposition used the defeat of the Chinese revolution for the same purpose.

Formulated in the spring of 1927, the opposition's system of views on the Chinese question amounted to the following. Lenin's thesis about an alliance with national revolutionary forces was wrongly interpreted as an instruction to sever links with non-communist anti-imperialist forces. In terms of the alignment and the nature of its class forces, the Chinese revolution was said in principle to be similar to the 1905 Russian revolution. The anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and specifically military character of the Chinese revolution directed against Chinese militarism, the menial of the feudal-imperialist bloc, was actually disregarded. The development of this revolution into a socialist one was proclaimed as its direct aim; the large number of hired workers and poor peasants in the country was described as a factor guaranteeing this transition. Emphasis was laid on the thesis that there was no reason to be afraid of "scaring off" the bourgeoisie (here the opposition artificially copied the Russian revolution of 1905, ignoring the fact that the bourgeoisie in Russia was not a revolutionary force, while the Kuomintang in China was a powerful and, for the time being, a revolutionary force). The spontaneous, unorganised actions of the peasantry and the urban poor were overestimated (and in this respect the very important fact that as a rule these movements acquired a mass character only following the entry of the national revolutionary armies into a given region, was fully ignored). Sun Yat-senism was not regarded as a step forward, and a means of drawing masses of working people into the revolutionary struggle (and in the course of the revolution as a means of placing a higher form of ideology within their reach—such was the opinion of the Comintern), but as "narodism plus nationalism plus constitutional democracy" ("Either Marxism or Sun Yat-senism that is the question", the opposition emphasised in 1927). The idea of forming a government which would uphold the interests of the class bloc was proclaimed "nonsense" and a "rejection

of Marxism". The Kuomintang was described as being an ordinary bourgeois party which had never adhered to revolutionary positions and only pretended to be a revolutionary party. The opposition urged the immediate adoption of the slogan calling for the formation of Soviets in China, first and foremost of Soviets of workers' deputies, as bodies of power. The Kuomintang's agrarian programme, which if implemented could have helped to rally the masses round the Communist Party against the Kuomintang élite, was rejected. The opposition tried to get the Kuomintang speed up the agrarian revolution throughout China; this would have placed the poorly organised peasant masses in opposition to the national revolutionary armies whose arrival in one or another province usually lent greater impetus to the peasant movement there.

The opposition insisted that the tactic which had been employed against the autocracy in Russia should also be employed against imperialism in China; it claimed that recognition of certain anti-imperialist potentialities of the national bourgeoisie was therefore nothing else but Menshevism.

The opposition's views found their concentrated expression in Trotsky's statement ridiculing the conclusion about the vast significance of masses' own political experience in the process of the transition to a new higher phase of the revolution. But history has ridiculed Trotsky; Chiang Kai-shek's military dictatorship was overthrown after long years of struggle of millions of people and not without certain compromises; as regards attempts to gain this objective without the "masses themselves" and without compromises, all of them ended in failure.

Objectively speaking the opposition advanced a programme for the defeat of the Chinese revolution. An attempt to implement this programme would have resulted not only in the rout of the Communist Party of China when the revolution was still in its early stage, but also in a sharp decrease in the scope and scale of revolution which it had achieved thanks to the participation and the vanguard role of the Communists in the united national front over a long period. As a matter of fact an attempt to carry out this programme would have led to the immediate rout of the Communist Par-

ty, and the Chinese revolution would have turned into a revolution at the top without passing through the mass stage.

The Comintern rejected the tactical line which the opposition strove to impose upon it, and adopted a basically different tactic. The enlarged Seventh Plenum of the ECCI characterised the revolution in China as an anti-imperialist bourgeois-democratic revolution aimed at liberating the Chinese people from the imperialist yoke, uniting the country, establishing the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry, nationalising the land, and confiscating the property owned by foreign capital. The Comintern correctly considered that prior to Chiang Kai-shek's coup in April 1927, the revolution was a national one. And later, after the coup, the Comintern with good reason did not reverse its opinion that this tactic was the only correct one and that the success of the coup was due not to an allegedly erroneous tactical line of the Communist Party but to the strength of the enemy. At the same time the Comintern emphasised that because it was young the Communist Party was not insured against wrong decisions. Taking into consideration the giant tasks which the Communist Party with its lack of experience, had to tackle, the Comintern believed that the surprising thing was not that it had made mistakes, but that their number was much smaller than those made by many other sections of the Communist International. The Comintern pointed out that calling for the establishment of Soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies across China would have been tantamount to setting the task of a direct transition to a new, proletarian organisation of the state in contemporary China and proclaiming the current revolution in China a socialist revolution at a time when the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the country was only in its initial phase.¹

¹ J. V. Stalin introduced important amendments into the draft theses of the Enlarged Seventh Plenum of the ECCI on the Chinese question which made the initial version of this document more realistic. For instance, he justly believed that it would have been unrealistic to outlaw usury and proposed that a programme of "vigorous struggle" against it should be launched. Instead of the demand that the Communists should not mechanically seize the leadership of the left wing of the Kuomintang, Stalin, who evidently thought that *so-far* seizure of leadership was out of the question,

The Comintern sharply condemned the opposition's grossly erroneous tactical "principle" which in the final analysis implied that the proletariat would find itself in increasing isolation as the revolution continued to develop.

In formulating its tactical line in matters bearing on the Chinese revolution, the Comintern found a correct approach to a range of important theoretical and practical problems which for the first time confronted the communist movement in their entire magnitude. For instance, at the time the Comintern correctly refused to regard the Kuomintang as an ordinary bourgeois party, or as an ordinary political party, and viewed it as a political bloc where a struggle between different class and political forces was in progress. The Comintern seriously contributed to the development of Marxist thought by underscoring the nation-wide character of the initial stage of the Chinese revolution of 1925-1927. Another new feature was that it pointed to the vast, in some ways autonomous and quite often, decisive role of the military factor in this revolution. It gave an exhaustive and precise characterisation of Chinese militarism which was drawn up by the Commission on the Chinese Question of the Enlarged Seventh Plenum of the ECCI.¹ The idea of shifting the

proposed that the text should read: "Communist influence over the left wing should not be effected mechanically." He also suggested that in the phrase concerning the activity of the revolutionary government which read: "...it will immediately extend the narrow limits of bourgeois democracy", the word "immediately" be deleted and the words "nationalisation of large enterprises, mines and banks" be complemented with "having the nature of imperialist concession".

¹ "They say that Chinese militarism is simply the generals, on the other hand, they say that Chinese militarism is some form of a feudal or semi-feudal order," said A. S. Bubnov at the sitting of this Commission. "I must say that when taken separately neither the one nor the other definition of Chinese militarism is correct. Chinese militarism is a military organisation, an organisation of the armed forces. Chinese militarism is one of the main channels of capitalist accumulation in China. And, finally, Chinese militarism is a military organisation, a channel of capitalist accumulation, which is surrounded by a whole number of semi-feudal state bodies. It follows that Chinese militarism is a military-state organisation which is a channel of capitalist accumulation surrounded by a whole system of semi-feudal state bodies. This military-state organisation (Chinese militarism) has links with one or another group of foreign imperialism. It has a definite class nature with its inherent trends of

focal point of the revolutionary struggle to the northwest of China where the danger of an intervention was smaller, where contact with the USSR was ensured and where it could receive the latter's assistance, was first advanced in 1927.

It would be a gross error to think that the Comintern trusted Chiang Kai-shek. After the events of March 20, 1926, which bared the anti-communist visage of the Commander-in-Chief of the national revolutionary armies, the ECCI realised that sooner or later Chiang Kai-shek would attack China's revolutionary forces.¹ It was necessary, therefore, to win time to enable the revolution to gain increasing momentum and the Communist Party to strengthen itself so as to be able to repulse the impending offensive of the counter-revolution.

The situation was further aggravated by the fact that as the CPC, with the Comintern's vigorous assistance, gained in strength and influence it presented an ever-growing threat to the consolidated and bourgeoisified right-wing military-bureaucratic upper stratum of the Kuomintang. The reason was the strategic course of the CPC and the Comintern aimed at carrying the revolution further into a socialist stage. The preponderance of Chiang Kai-shek's strength was enormous because the broadest masses continued to trust what only yesterday was a revolutionary Kuomintang, and the CPC would have lost many supporters if it did not follow the banner of the Kuomintang, and because the latter had very

development. This military organisation is a product of the extreme backwardness of the Chinese economy, the profoundest dismemberment of China, the disintegration of the central apparatus of state power and gigantic agrarian overpopulation."

¹ When it acted in alliance with the Communist Party, the leadership of the Kuomintang, particularly its left wing, emphasised that the "Kuomintang should maintain the closest contact with the general headquarters of the world revolution", that it "needs the leadership of the Comintern", and that "the Kuomintang's greatest wish is to enter into still closer relations with the Comintern". The Executive Committee of the Kuomintang suggested that the Kuomintang should join the Comintern, but the latter turned down this proposal. In a word the Kuomintang leadership was vigorously "repainting itself into the colour of communism". The Comintern never had the slightest doubt that the Kuomintang was a nationalist and not a communist organisation. The attacks of the opposition over this issue were absolutely groundless.

close links with the army. Needless to say no tactic could guarantee the attainment of a prematurely set strategic aim, with the enemy having a tremendous superiority in strength. Without bringing the CPC any closer to power, this aim enabled the counter-revolution to broaden its front of action.

The CPC was much too weak to effectively repulse the organisers of the coup and the proponents of the military dictatorship. Moreover, the CPC had a very crafty, experienced and vicious enemy in the person of Chiang Kai-shek who at the time still wielded great influence over the masses. The notions about the revolutionary potentialities of the left-wing Kuomintang government in Wuhan which were entertained after the establishment of a military dictatorship in Shanghai failed to materialise: Wuhan did not turn into a centre of attraction for the revolutionary forces, and the members of the left-wing Kuomintang government were unable to deal effectively with the usurper.

By March 1927, the Communist Party, which had 30 members in 1921, had turned into a mass organisation with a membership of nearly 58,000, of whom 53.8 per cent were workers, 18.7 per cent peasants, 19.1 per cent intellectuals and 3.1 per cent servicemen. The Party had spread its influence to the trade unions which united broad masses of workers and numerous peasant unions. It was a catalyst of the revolutionary process.

But while the opposition believed that all this justified its efforts to spur the Party to attempt an independent seizure of power, the Comintern believed that under the existing circumstances the CPC should struggle for power within the framework of an united front. In other words, the Comintern and the opposition approached the tactical problems of the Chinese revolution from diametrically opposite positions.

For the first time in its history, the international communist movement was confronted with a situation when a Communist party whose membership and influence were growing rapidly was moving into the forefront of the national liberation struggle. For the first time there arose the problem of balancing national and class factors in an anti-imperialist revolution. And the Comintern tackled it at the time

from basically correct positions by rejecting the absolutely hopeless path onto which the opposition wanted to push it.

Chiang Kai-shek struck his blow just when the revolution was preparing the masses for decisive battles against imperialism and feudalism and prospects were on hand for its transition to a more profound stage. But the fact that the tactic of united front did not bring victory in 1927 in no way signifies that the opposite, adventuristic and sectarian tactic advocated by the opposition would have proved to be correct. On the contrary, if the Comintern followed the path the opposition tried to foist upon it, Chiang Kai-shek would have been able to strike his blow much earlier, and the Chinese revolution would have been defeated at a much earlier phase. For instance the national revolutionary armies could have hardly executed their victorious march northward which stirred great masses of China's population. The defeat of the Chinese Communists provided no grounds for drawing the conclusion that the non-proletarian forces of China, and of the entire East for that matter, had exhausted their revolutionary potentialities, and that together with them the united front tactic had disappeared from the scene. And the Comintern made no such conclusion at the time.

It is important to note, for example, that 1927 and 1928 saw the highest upsurge in the activity of the Anti-Imperialist League (1927-1935), the first broad anti-imperialist organisation of the international working class, the progressive intelligentsia of the capitalist countries and representatives of the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries.¹ Shortly before the Sixth Congress of the Comintern D. Z. Manuilsky said that if the League had embraced "only Communist parties", it "would have been a second edition of the Comintern", and stressed that this tactic was impermissible.

Later, in 1934 and 1935, the Comintern further developed the united front tactic whose application in both the West and the East produced positive results.

¹ For details about the Anti-Imperialist League see: G. Z. Sorokin, *The Anti-Imperialist League (1927-1935)*, Moscow, 1965 (in Russian).

FROM THE SIXTH TO THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE COMINTERN.

THE SEVENTH CONGRESS

AND THE SHIFT IN THE COMINTERN POLICY IN THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION

Questions related to the strategy and tactics of the Comintern in the national and colonial question featured prominently at the Sixth Congress which took place in August and September 1928.

While capitalist theoreticians kept insisting that capitalism was firmly stabilised throughout the world, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern warned that the partial stabilisation of capitalism was coming to an end and that a period of exacerbation of all economic and political contradictions of the capitalist system, a period of crises, political conflicts and liberation wars was approaching. The world economic crisis of 1929-33 and acute class battles showed that this forecast was both correct and timely.

An especially significant fact was that the Sixth Congress completed the exposure of the theory of decolonisation which had been condemned in 1924 at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern but which still exerted a certain amount of influence on some Communists.

"All the chatter of the imperialists and their lackeys about the policy of decolonisation being carried through by the imperialist powers, about promotion of the 'free development of the colonies'," it was stated in the decisions of the Sixth Congress, "reveals itself as nothing but an imperialist lie. It is of the utmost importance that Communists both in the imperialist and in the colonial countries should completely expose this lie."¹

The Sixth Congress adopted a number of important decisions stimulating the development of the revolutionary struggle in the colonies, and also advanced erroneous premises concerning some aspects of the national liberation struggle.

The theses of the Congress justly noted that by upholding its class interests against imperialism the bourgeoisie of the colonies also upheld national interests, and that the views

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 88, December 12, 1928, p. 1664.

about the anti-national, compradore posture of the entire national bourgeoisie were incorrect. At the same time the theses observed that "the national bourgeoisie has not the significance of a force in the struggle against imperialism".¹

Alongside an objective assessment of the specific weaknesses of the proletariat in a colonial country there was a slogan designating the consolidation of the hegemony of the proletariat as an immediate goal although no such hegemony existed in any colonial or semi-colonial country. Such inconsistency was engendered by the widespread idea that the national liberation movement could develop successfully only under the leadership of the working class.

The assertions contained in the decisions of the Sixth Congress that the influence of the national bourgeoisie among the masses was declining (although it continued to expand in a vast majority of the Eastern countries) and that bourgeois nationalism had little prospect of success "in relation to the working class", were far removed from reality.

The theses said: "The concrete open conflicts of the national-reformist bourgeoisie with imperialism, although of little significance in themselves, may, under certain conditions, indirectly serve as the cause of the unleashing of even greater revolutionary mass actions."² At the same time it was pointed out that the national bourgeoisie was mainly "hindering" the struggle against imperialism. Such a presentation of the question did not conform to that part of the theses where the idea that the contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and imperialism was profound and permanent was expounded.

Lenin wrote of the necessity to enter into temporary alliances with the bourgeois democracy in the colonies. And yet the theses stated: "It is necessary to reject the formation of any kind of bloc between the Communist Party and the national-reformist opposition."³

No less contradictory was the evaluation of petty-bourgeois nationalism by the Sixth Congress. Next to the correct observation that "the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, the students, and such like, are very frequently the most determined

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, p. 1667.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 1666-67.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1668.

representatives not only of the specific interests of the petty bourgeoisie, but also of the general objective interests of the entire national bourgeoisie", the theses claimed that "they cannot act as representatives of peasant interests".¹ This assessment, as is known, was not confirmed in the course of the further struggle.

The theses correctly characterised petty-bourgeois parties as national revolutionary, but at the same time implied that they evolved in the direction of national reformism and were revolutionary only at the very beginning. Accordingly, the struggle against these parties for hegemony over the peasantry was proclaimed a priority.

Qualifying the stand of the CC CPC during the Wuhan period of the Chinese revolution as capitulatory in relation to the bourgeoisie, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern set the CPC the task of concentrating on seizing state power already in that period. It recommended the Indian Communist Party to advance the slogan of winning the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry through an armed uprising, to direct fire upon the Indian bourgeoisie, although, the latter did in fact participate in the anti-imperialist movement.

All these instructions were based on the relatively widespread erroneous assessment of the situation in the colonies and dependent countries. It was assumed that in the eight years that had elapsed since the Second Congress the national bourgeoisie had in general lost its significance as a force struggling against imperialism, and that, as a result, the political differentiation of classes had reached a level at which the peasants and the semi-proletarian urban sections were prepared to set themselves in opposition to the national bourgeoisie and follow the working class. Therefore the task of casting off the political domination of the bourgeoisie was directly associated with the establishment of the hegemony of the working class in the national movement.

Lenin's instructions concerning the national and the colonial questions were based not only on the situation in 1920. Comprising as they did an inalienable component of the overall strategic plan of a world revolution, they disclosed the general tendency in the national liberation movement

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1666.

and not merely a separate instance of it. Eight years after the Second Congress of the Comintern the course of events demanded no less insistently than in 1920 the pursuance of a united anti-imperialist front policy.

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern, even though it reached a number of erroneous conclusions, emphasised that it was necessary to abide by the decisions of the Second Congress. The theses concerning the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonial countries began with the following words: "The VI Congress of the Communist International declares that the 'Theses on the National and Colonial Questions' drawn up by Lenin and adopted at the II Congress still have full validity, and should serve as a guiding line for the further work of the Communist Parties. Since the time of the II Congress the actual significance of the colonies and semi-colonies, as factors of crisis in the imperialist world system has vastly increased."¹

Further on the theses indicated the need to reckon with the national features of each country in determining the Communists' tasks in the national liberation movement. "In order correctly to determine the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement, it is important as a starting point to take into consideration the *degree of maturity* attained by the movement in the separate colonial countries."²

The decisions of the Sixth Congress also contained important points concerning the danger of "leaping over" an incomplete stage of the revolution, and pointed out the difference between the forces of bourgeois national reformism and the feudal imperialist camp. They also assessed the national revolutionary petty-bourgeois parties as the allies of the revolution at the stage. The theses set the national liberation movement the very important task of forming genuinely proletarian parties in the backward countries.³

The period from 1929 to 1933 was characterised by an acute anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of the colonies and dependencies, both organised and spontaneous and conducted in a variety of forms. Numerous anti-imperialist groups and organisations, including communist, national rev-

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Op. cit., p. 1659.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1667.

³ See: *The Communist International in Documents*, pp. 832-70 (in Russian).

olutionary and national reformist were involved in the movement.

In their struggle against imperialism national bourgeois circles gravitated towards a reformist policy. Usually with the help of compromise agreements, they gradually won concessions from the colonialists and reluctantly turned to the masses with revolutionary appeals. But as the anti-imperialist movement of the masses developed, the national bourgeois parties endeavoured to assume leading positions in it and use it to exact concessions from the colonialists. Quite often they tried to control and inhibit the activity of popular movements which could threaten the class privileges of the local bourgeoisie. There was a marked prejudice against the Communist parties which at times developed into outright militant anti-communism among bourgeois nationalists.

Right-wing national bourgeois groupings associated with the wealthy bourgeoisie, their proportion fluctuating considerably depending on the political situation, were inclined to strike deals with domestic feudal elements and sometimes resorted to conciliation, bordering on capitulation, with the colonialists.

Parties which were petty-bourgeois both as regards their composition and leadership had all the typical features of that social stratum, and their politically active part usually adhered to national revolutionary positions. They went along with the workers and could be susceptible to radical political programmes including those with a socialist colouring. A remarkable feature of petty-bourgeois radical democracy in a number of countries (India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Burma) was the craving of its more mature representatives for Marxism-Leninism which eventually brought many of them into the communist movement. But it was far from always that the left-wing nationalists were able and willing to march in step with the broad masses of working people. Quite often national revolutionary organisations vacillated in the struggle, acted rashly and on impulse, succumbed to the propaganda of national, racial and religious exclusiveness and sometimes displayed an inclination towards political adventurism and terroristic methods. Naturally, all this could not ensure the lasting success of the anti-imperialist move-

ment, and merely compromised it.

With the national liberation struggle on the upgrade, a responsible historical mission devolved upon the Communist parties in the colonies and semi-colonial countries.

The world economic crisis left a deep imprint on the tactical line of the Communist parties in the metropolitan countries and the colonies. In the United States and Europe, the colossal urban unemployment, the mass ruination of the peasantry and the middle sections of the population, the unprecedented depression and the destruction of the production forces aroused anger and despair among the broad masses and threw the ruling classes into confusion. The situation was that of the eve of a social catastrophe. At the time not only communist but many bourgeois ideologists thought that the capitalist system was on the verge of collapse. The Communist parties increased their activity in these conditions and their influence in many capitalist countries heightened. There was growing belief that the days of bourgeois rule were numbered, that the establishment of dictatorship of the proletariat could be a way out of the crisis, and that the masses in the majority of the European countries would follow the Communist parties along this road.

The unprecedented suffering of the masses during the years of the crisis and their sharply intensified discontent with their situation, revolutionary impatience and tendencies to accelerate the course of events increased in the communist movement in the Eastern countries. The perfidy of the Kuomintang leadership in 1927 aroused great doubts whether the bourgeois-national movement in China and some other countries should still be regarded as a potential ally in the anti-imperialist struggle.

Engendered by the pressure of the non-proletarian masses sectarian tendencies became apparent in the young communist movement in the East from the very first days. In the West sectarianism was a response to the betrayal of right-wing Social Democracy, while in the East it was strengthened by the indecision of the petty bourgeoisie and the conciliation of the nationalists. The Comintern waged a consistent struggle against sectarian tendencies in the Communist parties of the East. Lenin devoted a great deal of attention to this question. After his death the ECCI actively helped the young Commu-

nist parties of the East to get rid of this malady (particularly vivid examples of the Comintern's influence were its struggle for a united national front in China in the middle and the latter half of the 1920s, its criticism of left-sectarian errors of the CPC in 1930 and its condemnation of the leftist deviation in the Communist Party of Indonesia in 1924-26). Nevertheless at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of 1930s the sectarian deviation acquired a dangerous character and fairly broad dimensions in the still inexperienced Communist parties of economically backward countries.

It was a period when the international communist movement was beset by serious difficulties which grew out of the erroneous appraisal of the role played by Social-Democracy and the national bourgeoisie and the direct course for establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat in the European countries at a time when the alignment of class forces still did not warrant the placing of this goal on the agenda. The promotion of the slogan calling for the direct establishment of Soviet-type rule as a form of the dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry in the backward countries, was an attempt to step over an incompleting stage of the movement, i.e., a deviation from Lenin's concept of the world revolutionary process.

The course steered by some Communist parties in the East towards breaking relations with the national bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political organisations had a negative impact on the outcome of individual actions of the oppressed masses. It also affected the future of the Anti-Imperialist League whose establishment had once been a major achievement of the Communists in alliance with national revolutionary and other progressive forces. Now a number of organisations including the Indian National Congress, the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), the Nationalist Party (Egypt) and the Nationalist Party of Indonesia withdrew from the League.

The League's Executive Committee endorsed a series of programme demands which did not conform to the actual state and political level of the liberation struggle in the colonial countries. Ignoring the broad, mass character of the Anti-Imperialist League as an organisation of the united front of diverse anti-imperialist forces, the leadership of its

Executive Committee tried to turn it into an international political organisation of a communist nature. This kept influential bourgeois-nationalist and petty-bourgeois parties away from the League, depriving it of its links with the masses. The League's position was further aggravated by persecutions on the part of the imperialist governments. In 1933 the League's International Secretariat was compelled to move from Germany to Paris and then to London. The Secretariat's activity was placed under police surveillance, and in the colonial countries the League's leading officials were arrested and sometimes even murdered. In Indonesia, for example, a person could be imprisoned for being a member of the League. Under these circumstances the League encountered ever increasing difficulties and finally, in 1935, ceased to exist.

Between 1929 and 1933 almost all Communist parties in Asian and African countries were still in the process of formation and accumulating experience without which they could not attain political maturity. The struggle of the masses and the practical activity of the Communist parties were a touchstone for testing the correctness of the tactical lines and slogans, and made it possible to detect and rectify errors and formulate strategy and tactics which conformed to the concrete historical and national conditions in each given country, as is prescribed by Marxism-Leninism. The peoples of Asia and Africa learned a lot from the successes and failures of the national liberation movement in that period. The lessons of those years enriched the experience of individual Communist parties and the Comintern. They were later analysed and generalised and became the basis for the further development and perfection of communist strategy and tactics, particularly the tactic of a united anti-imperialist front.

In the mid-1930s the formation of a united anti-imperialist front against fascism, war and colonial oppression became the demand of the time. In their everyday experience the progressive forces became aware of the urgency of this task and were finding the ways and means to solve it.

Practical experience shows that the tactic of a broad united national anti-imperialist front turns a Communist party into a force whose influence is incomparably more important than its numerical strength. Occupying a most consistent

stand in the struggle for national liberation, applying the communist teaching to conditions of life and struggle of their people, fulfilling the practical tasks dictated by concrete historical conditions, that is, fulfilling Lenin's behests and fighting in the vanguard of the national liberation movement, the Communists lend it consistency, scope and strength, help consolidate national revolutionary and isolate conciliatory elements, and strengthen their own influence.

Between the Sixth and Seventh congresses of the Comintern the Communists under all conditions fought for worker-peasant power, opposing the national bourgeoisie and regarding it as an entirely reactionary force. They directed their main blows at its left wing as the chief danger for the further development of the national liberation movement (the Comintern's view at the time). In this situation they remained a small heroic detachment and even at the cost of their own lives and the lives of many revolutionaries were unable to break through the screen of nationalism into the thick of the broad masses and win the leading position in the movement. In many respects it was a period of lost opportunities. The majority of the Communist parties in Asia and Africa had still not turned into the vanguard of the national liberation movement. The young Communist parties in the colonies and dependences began to get rid of the elements of sectarianism only towards the end of this period. A very important role in this respect was played by the Comintern's course of combatting sectarianism in 1934 and 1935 and the experience of the young communist organisations themselves which had sustained temporary but at times very serious reverses, yet achieved their objectives when they employed genuinely Leninist tactics and creatively utilised the CPSU's experience in winning political influence among the masses.

A survey of the situation prepared by the Bureau of the ECCI Secretariat for the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, published in July 1935, conveyed the following picture of the communist movement in Asian and African countries.¹ After its defeat in 1926 the Communist Party of Indonesia had not yet reconstituted itself as an organised entity; the Communist Party of Indochina was forced to operate deep

¹ See: *The Communist International Prior to the Seventh World Congress (Materials)*, Moscow, 1935 (in Russian).

underground; soon after its foundation the Communist Party of the Philippines was routed and its leaders imprisoned; the Communist Party of India, in spite of the powerful upsurge of the national liberation struggle in the country, was not too influential with the masses and its influence began to grow only after the formation of a united trade union front; the Communist Party of Turkey was a small group which began to work in the legal trade unions only in 1932; the Korean Communists, who were a small group numerically, had still to reconstitute their party; the Communist Party of Palestine had weak links with the Arab working people and after it attenuated its influence among the Jewish workers at the end of the 1920s found itself without a serious social basis; the Communist organisation of Tunisia had not yet switched over to the tactic of a united front with national revolutionary elements and remained an association embracing several circles of European workers; the Communists of Egypt were a small group systematically harassed by the police; the Communists of Iran, who led the labour strike battles in conditions of rampant terror, were in the same position; the Communist Party of Algeria, one of the first to steer the course of an anti-fascist front, was beginning to gain influence among the broad masses of Arab working people; the Communist Party of Syria, that beginning with 1933 undertook serious efforts to win over the masses, moved into the vanguard of the strike struggle, consolidated its positions in the trade unions, began to work for closer relations with the national revolutionary parties with the view to forming a united anti-imperialist front and came out against the threat of an imperialist war and fascism (these were its first steps towards becoming an influential party). The only country in the East which had a mass, active and influential Communist Party at the time was China.

In the early half of 1934 the Comintern began a general turn towards implementing the united anti-fascist front tactics in the West and united anti-imperialist front tactics in the colonies and dependent countries. The turn did not come about at once. The experience of the class struggle made it necessary to discard the old sectarian approach. It was a gradual and difficult process of casting off illusions and the burden of dogmatism.

An enormous contribution to the development of the new strategic line in the international communist movement which conformed to the prevailing conditions was made by the ECCI and particularly by G. Dimitrov, O. Kuusinen, D. Manuilsky, P. Togliatti and other outstanding figures in the Comintern who insisted on the great urgency of uniting all anti-fascist forces to build a united anti-imperialist front. In that period the ECCI put in a great deal of work to generalise the experience of the communist movement both in the imperialist and in colonial and dependent countries, and also the experience of the anti-fascist and national liberation struggle.

The Comintern seriously studied the experience of the Communist Party of Brazil, the biggest dependent country on the American continent. It was the first Communist Party in that group of countries which formed a united anti-imperialist front on a nation-wide scale. At the end of 1934 the Communist Party of Brazil was a small organisation numbering 5,000 members but it was very influential with the trade unions and stood at the head of major strikes. The peasant movement was spreading in the country and revolutionary sentiments were increasing among the intelligentsia, office workers and other intermediate strata. Revolutionary petty-bourgeois parties supported the Communist Party.

In this situation a National Liberation Alliance, a political organisation of the revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc, was formed on the initiative of the Communists in early 1935. It embraced mass organisations of workers, peasants, white-collar workers, students, democratic circles in the army and navy, socialist parties, petty-bourgeois parties and national reformist groups. The Alliance worked out a programme of struggle for independence and democracy which brought more than 1,500,000 people into its ranks. It put forward the slogan: "All Power to the National Liberation Alliance". At the time the Alliance did not envisage the formation of a government which would be an organ of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry; its intention was to set up a national revolutionary or a people's revolutionary government which was to include representatives of all classes involved in the struggle for the national liberation of the Brazilian people,

including representatives of a part of the national bourgeoisie.

The reactionaries routed the Alliance, but the experience of its struggle was of the utmost importance, because it was the first time that a united anti-imperialist front had been established on a national scale, and the Communist Party was the vanguard of the general democratic struggle.

Also instructive were developments in Mexico where the national democratic forces temporarily won power in the course of the anti-imperialist struggle. The popular petty-bourgeois leader Lázaro Cárdenas won the 1934 Presidential elections. His election platform included the allotment of land to the peasants, restriction of the rights of foreign capital and development of the state industrial sector. In a situation characterised by an increasing workers' and peasants' movement Cárdenas met the demands of the masses: he reintroduced democratic freedoms and actively enforced the agrarian reform. In 1938 the government nationalised foreign oil companies. Many industrial and agricultural enterprises were confiscated and turned over to production co-operatives of working people. In its struggle against imperialism and the latifundists the government relied on the masses, and went so far in its support for workers' and peasants' actions as to organise a people's militia. There is every reason to say that the Cárdenas administration was a national revolutionary anti-imperialist government.

The problem of a united anti-imperialist front was of vast importance for China.

There were extensive objective prerequisites for the establishment of a united national front in China. The omnipotence of bureaucratic capital which ruined the petty and middle bourgeoisie evoked great discontent. The destructive rivalry of Japanese capital and direct seizure of Chinese enterprises in the occupied regions opened the eyes of the Chinese national bourgeois circles to the fact that the capitulatory policy of the Kuomintang leadership was directed against their class interests. The broad masses supported the Kuomintang only because they continued to regard it as a national force capable of repulsing the foreign invaders. After the Japanese had invaded Northeast China a considerable portion of the Kuomintang's supporters from the most

diverse sections of the population expressed increasing disapproval of the capitulatory policy of its leadership.

The operations of Feng Yu-hsiang's United Anti-Japanese Army in Chahar in 1933, the uprising of Tsai Ting-Kai's 19th Army in Fuchian in November 1933-January 1934 and the support it received from a group of anti-Japanese-minded members of the Kuomintang, the establishment of the Chinese National Salvation League in Shanghai with Sung Ching-ling at the head, the appearance of unions with anti-Japanese programmes in other cities and provinces in 1933 and 1934, and the activation of the patriotic labour and student movements brought enormous pressure to bear upon the Kuomintang leadership.

Thus, the Japanese aggression and the Kuomintang's capitulatory tactics created conditions which could have enabled the Communist Party to assume the leadership in the struggle for national salvation and build the foundations for its forthcoming victory.

But in the summer of 1934, the Soviet regions¹ in Kiangsi Province were encircled by the Kuomintang troops, and the Chinese Red Army faced the threat of a complete rout.

The situation in Kiangsi was due not only to Kuomintang's preponderance in strength and the blunders in war tactics of the CPC leadership which advocated a "full offensive along the entire front" at the time and underestimated the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare. Political factors also played a major role. The CPC line of accomplishing a Soviet revolution throughout the whole of China as an essential condition for repulsing Japanese aggression failed to win the support of the broad masses. This, in the final analysis, proved to be the basic political reason for the critical situation in the Soviet regions. Broad sections of the Chinese population were prepared to wage a determined fight against the foreign invaders, but they still had faith in the Kuomintang and were not in favour of a Soviet revolution. They backed the CPC only after becoming convinced through long and traumatic experience that it was the only force capable of leading the struggle for national liberation. Between 1931 and 1934 the CPC leadership did not fully use the Party as

¹ Areas where the Soviets—councils of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies—were established as bodies of popular government.

a force which could occupy the leading place in the national liberation struggle. The defeat of the Soviet regions in 1934 demonstrated to the Chinese Communists that the essential condition for the CPC to come to power was its most active participation in the national liberation struggle, forming a temporary alliance with the Kuomintang. In a word, the road to leadership lay through a united national front.

In keeping with the general line of the world communist movement the CPC in 1935 began to shift to the tactics of a united national front on the basis of a joint struggle against the common enemy—the Japanese invaders.

The new features which appeared in India's political life in 1935 showed that in that country, too, the Communists in the course of class battles came to realise the significance of the struggle for anti-imperialist unity, and their first move was to re-establish the cohesion of the trade union movement.

On the eve of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern *The Communist International*, the ECCI periodical, published a very important article entitled "The Struggle for a United Anti-Imperialist Front in the Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries" (No. 20-21, 1935). It contained generalised account of the world communist movements' political line towards the national-colonial question under the new conditions of struggle. The article noted the sharp contradiction between the interests of imperialism and those of the bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi-colonies, the rapid growth of the national liberation movement and the extensive participation of the working class and the peasantry in it. It pointed out that the feudal and compradore elements were the principal mainstay of imperialism in its struggle against the national bourgeoisie in the backward countries. Economically and politically the national bourgeoisie was not a solid, non-differentiated mass, for left-wing trends were breaking away from the national reformist parties and evolving towards national revolutionary positions. National reformist organisations, too, were sometimes inclined to support the people's struggle when there was an upsurge in the national liberation movement against an onslaught of imperialism. Moreover, under the conditions of direct imperialist intervention, the journal wrote, individual bourgeois groups "for a short period" could take part in the anti-imperialist struggle (defence of

Shanghai and the creation of the Fuchian government).¹

The journal further noted that the CPC had already taken the first steps towards the formation of a united anti-imperialist front. It praised the formation of the National Liberation Alliance in Brazil and criticised the Communist Party of India for making the struggle for a Soviet workers' and peasants' power a condition for the establishment of a united front. The journal said of the Communist Party of Cuba that it had modified its course and proposed to the national reformists to conduct a joint struggle against imperialism under the slogans "Cuba for the Cubans, down with Yankee Imperialism in Cuba" and "For a National Revolutionary Government". Nonetheless, the article said "at present the Communist parties are at the very beginning of the struggle for the formation of a united anti-imperialist front".

The journal said that the slogan calling for the establishment of Soviet power in the backward countries was a propaganda device. Just as the demand for the alienation of landed estates without compensation it should not be put forward without taking into account at what stage of the revolution this is done and the specific features of the struggle in a given backward country. Meanwhile, it went on to say, the Communist parties in these countries have the support of only the minority of the proletariat, and broad sections of the people and the proletariat are influenced by the reformists. "The rejection of united national front tactics under the pretext of the danger involved in joint actions with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism," the journal said, "is in effect a refusal to prepare for national liberation revolutions and unavoidably leads to the isolation of the Communist parties from a broad popular movement."²

Referring to the support for the liberation struggle by the national reformist bourgeoisie, the journal said that it was not only a manoeuvre designed to prevent the masses from going over to the side of the Communist party. "In the first place," it said, "it is the class position of the national bourgeoisie, a position of vacillation between imperialism and a

¹ See: *The Communist International*, 1935, Nos. 20-21, p. 107 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 109.

national revolution." Left-wing groups in the national reformist parties, it went on, could become "a bridge leading to revolution" for the masses.¹ The article criticised the mistaken idea that the proletariat in the colonies and semi-colonial countries had already achieved hegemony in the national liberation movement; the attitude towards all non-proletarian parties as though they were a solid counter-revolutionary front; and the "neutrality" of the Communists in the battles against imperialism: "Nothing could be more erroneous than to think that the proletariat will allegedly forfeit its hegemony (moreover, one which it has not yet won) if the Communists enter into a temporary agreement with national reformist organisations or form a more solid bloc with national revolutionary parties to fight imperialism, while maintaining (and this is the main condition for entering into such agreements) their organisational and political independence."² Finally, by promoting an independent radical agrarian programme, the journal wrote, the Communist parties at the given stage should not make the slogan for the confiscation of landed estates without compensation a condition for entering into an anti-imperialist agreement with national revolutionaries or national reformists.

This important article in *The Communist International* expounded new ideas and instructions drawn up by the ECCI leadership as it went ahead with preparations for the Seventh Congress (July and August 1935).

At the Seventh Congress, a special section in the report by Georgi Dimitrov dealt with questions concerning the formation of a united anti-imperialist front. Dimitrov emphasised the need to take into account the different conditions in each given country. He recommended the involvement of broad masses into the National Liberation Alliance of Brazil and said that the slogan "All power to the National Liberation Alliance" was an absolutely correct one; he advised the Indian Communists to work in the National Congress and thus contribute to the crystallisation of its national revolutionary wing. Dimitrov pointed out that the task which faced the Communist Party of China was that of forming the

"broadest united anti-imperialist front against Japanese imperialism and its Chinese agents". Along with the Communists the front should include "all the organised forces which existed on Chinese territory and which were prepared to fight in deed for the liberation of their country and people".

Although the question of the national liberation movement was not included as a separate point in the agenda, the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern directly concerned this problem since they signified a radical turn in the tactics of the world communist movement. In the final analysis the errors of the Communist parties in the highly developed capitalist countries as well as in the colonies and semi-colonies reflected the "deep-rooted evil" of sectarianism in the world communist movement. The decisions of the Seventh Congress removed obstacles on the way to the formation of a united front—anti-fascist in the West and anti-imperialist in the East.

In its resolution the Congress made it clear that the task of the Communist parties was actively to participate in mass anti-imperialist movements led by nationalists and to organise joint anti-imperialist actions on the basis of concrete programmes.

A separate part of this section of the resolution was devoted to China. Its essence was that the Soviet movement should be combined with the development of a popular anti-imperialist movement throughout the country, and that movement should be conducted under the slogan of national revolutionary struggle.

At that time the Comintern urged the Communist parties in the colonies and semi-colonial countries, with the exception of China, to work for the formation of a "people's revolutionary anti-imperialist government". While being an anti-imperialist government in the main it would not yet be a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry, for it would include representatives of other classes that were also fighting for national liberation. The programme of such a government was meant to include large-scale social measures consistent with the interests of the working people. It was implied that the slogan for its formation would not be put forward together with the

¹ *The Communist International*, p. 109.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 110-11.

slogan for the establishment of Soviet power. "The shift to Soviet government," wrote *The Communist International* in that period, "will depend on a shift in the correlation of class forces in the course of the revolution, the consolidation of the hegemony of the proletariat and the strengthening of links between the workers and the peasant masses." In other words, the slogan of struggle for Soviet power, as a slogan of the given stage of the revolution, no longer applied to the colonies and semi-colonies which was a natural result of the shift to the tactic of a united anti-imperialist front.

In the following years the course adopted at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern was tested in class battles, the anti-fascist struggle and national revolutionary movements, and the world revolutionary practice fully confirmed that this Leninist course was the only correct one. Today, decades later, the Communists of all countries continue to regard these decisions as an effective weapon, and highly appreciate the further development by the Comintern of Lenin's legacy in programme and tactics.

After the Seventh Congress the struggle for the unity of action of all anti-fascist and anti-imperialist forces against fascism, war and colonial oppression became the basis of the tactics of all Communist parties and within a short period of time proved to be very successful. The anti-imperialist unity of action which emerged in the mid-1930s in many colonies and dependent countries stimulated the liberation movements, played an important part in consolidating the international front of democratic, anti-fascist forces and helped strengthen the positions of the Communist parties which were increasingly turning into the genuine vanguard of the popular struggle for national liberation, democracy and peace.

While the Seventh Congress held its sessions the leadership of the Communist Party of China issued an Appeal to All the People of China calling for resistance to the Japanese invasion and for salvation of the country. The Appeal was compiled with the active participation of the ECCI. The CPC said that it was prepared to begin talks on the formation of a government of national defence with any party or group, political or military authority which wanted to join the struggle to save the country. The Kuomintang government res-

ponded neither to this nor to subsequent appeals of the CPC. It continued to wage a war against the CPC and its armed forces which were fighting their way into the northwest of China. At the same time the Kuomintang made more and more concessions to the Japanese aggressors. Only after the Chinese Red Army had entrenched itself in the northwest where it formed a Soviet region which could rely on the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic, only following a fresh upsurge of the national liberation movement and a sharp growth of discontent of the broad sections of the population with the conciliatory and capitulatory policy of the Kuomintang leadership did the latter finally agree to modify its tactics. At the beginning of 1937 the civil war in China came to an end. And when Japan attacked China in July 1937 the CPC became the vanguard of the united anti-Japanese front in the war of liberation. Thus, the CPC laid the basis for its future victory.

In those years the Korean Communists worked hard and successfully to unite all the forces which could take part in the struggle for national independence. The Communists of Indochina repulsed the Trotskyites, who attacked the policy of the Comintern and opposed the formation of a united front claiming that the future war against the aggression of the fascist powers would be unjust on the part of both sides, launched a struggle for anti-imperialist unity. The results of this struggle were fully felt in the years of the Second World War. The Indonesian Communists were active in national revolutionary organisations and in the broad anti-imperialist block of national parties which was formed in 1939. The Communist Party of the Philippines, which won the right to operate legally, adopted a line of uniting the broad sections of the population against the threat of a Japanese aggression, and its influence increased very substantially. The Communist Party of India started to surmount its sectarian errors. The Comintern's recommendations concerning the Party's activity were upheld by the Indian Communists who arrived at similar conclusions on the basis of their own experience. In its recommendations the Comintern underscored the importance of setting up an anti-imperialist popular front through a consistent struggle against colonial oppression and for the vital interests of the working masses.

The recommendations emphasised the need to secure the cohesion of left-wing forces—Communists, Socialists and left-wing of the National Congress—as the first step towards the creation of such a front. As the Indian Communists spread their Party's influence in mass associations of working people, they strove to turn the National Congress into an organisation of a united national front and did their utmost to strengthen its left wing. They were in the vanguard of the class struggle of the Indian proletariat which became more active in the pre-war years.

In the late 1930s the Communist parties worked with increasing success for the unity of the anti-imperialist forces, and as a result considerably boosted their influence and prestige.

With the threat of fascism and war hanging over the world there was the objective need to build a united anti-fascist front on a world scale. The organised forces of the national liberation movement in different countries displayed a different attitude to participation in the struggle against the fascist coalition. In many cases they were more concerned with their "own" imperialism. But under these conditions the oppressed peoples more quickly than ever before became aware of the historic importance of their struggle and their role in history. The gains which the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the offspring of the Great October Socialist Revolution, achieved under the leadership of the Communist Party, proved to be a mighty catalyst of this process. The Soviet Union's uncompromising struggle against fascism and war was a great example indicating the correct and reliable road to follow.

The fact that after the Second World War a balance of forces favourable for the cause of national liberation and democracy appeared in some oppressed countries was, in many respects, due to consistent adherence to this line by the Communist parties.

Lenin's strategic and tactical line in the national and colonial question found its most perfect expression in the decisions in the Second Congress of the Comintern. On the basis of the experience of 20 years of bitter struggle against imperialism, with major victories and heavy defeats, this line was developed by the Seventh Congress and played an

exceptionally important role in promoting a mass anti-imperialist movement in the colonies and dependent countries. Between 1917 and 1935, during the war of 1939-1945, and in the subsequent period of assault and pressure the oppressed peoples achieved the liquidation of the colonial empires of Britain, Japan, France, Italy and the Netherlands and jointly with the socialist countries struck devastating blows at international imperialism.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE COMINTERN'S POLICY IN THE EAST

G. I. LEVINSON

THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF THE EAST AT THE INITIAL STAGE OF THE WAR

The Second World War played an enormous role in the development of the national liberation struggle and the communist movement in the East. During the war crucial prerequisites appeared for the forthcoming turbulent events in Europe, Asia and Africa which led to the formation of the world socialist system and the collapse of the colonial system.

The causes which precipitated the war in September 1939 and its character were precisely those which had been predicted by Marxists-Leninists. In his report at the historic Seventh Congress of the Comintern, G. M. Dimitrov said that "fascism is unbridled chauvinism and predatory war".¹ By then it was already clear to the leaders of the international communist movement that the imminent war would differ profoundly from the First World War and develop in totally different conditions. Palmiro Togliatti said in his report at the Seventh Congress: "No one can doubt that the coming war, even if it were to begin as a war between two big imperialist powers, or as a war of a big power against a small country, will inevitably tend to develop into and will inevitably become a war against the Soviet Union."²

The Congress emphasised that among all the imperialist powers it was the fascist bloc countries that were the "chief instigators of war",³ whereas the Soviet Union pursued a

policy of "co-operation in the cause of the preservation of peace with the small states for whom war by placing their independence in jeopardy, represents a special danger, as well as with those governments which at the *present moment* are interested in the preservation of peace".¹ On this basis the communist movement drew an important tactical conclusion: if any state is attacked by one or more big imperialist powers "which want to destroy its national independence and national unity ... a war conducted by the national bourgeoisie of such a country to repel this attack may assume the character of a war of liberation, in which the working class and the Communists of that country cannot abstain from intervening. It is the task of the Communists of such a country, while carrying on an irreconcilable struggle to safeguard the economic and political positions of the workers, toiling peasants and national minorities, to be, at the same time, in the front ranks of the fighters for national independence and to fight the war of liberation to a finish, without allowing 'their' bourgeoisie to strike a bargain with the attacking powers to the prejudice of the interests of their country."² This precept of the Comintern organically stemmed from an objective analysis and conformed to Lenin's well-known premises concerning the distinction between just and unjust wars. "In a *genuinely* national war the words 'defence of the fatherland' are *not* a deception and *we are not opposed to it*."³

After the Seventh Congress of the Comintern the struggle against fascism became the central slogan of the world communist movement. Encouraged by reactionaries the aggressors grew increasingly arrogant and the threat of the war loomed nearer. In its 1939 May Day Appeal the Comintern urged all those who cherished national independence and democracy to rally around the slogan "defence of peace on the basis of a determined repulse to the fascist aggressors" as a platform for an international united front.⁴ In this ap-

¹ G. M. Dimitrov, *For Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism*, Sofia Press, 1969, p. 12.

² M. Ercoli, *The Fight For Peace*, New York, 1935, p. 45.

³ *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1935, p. 36.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³ V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 31.

⁴ *The Communist International*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, 1939, p. 258.

peal the Comintern underscored that fascism demanded a "re-division of colonies".¹ The Comintern worked hard to explain the essence of fascism to the people, to show them that fascist countries were acting under the banner of rabid anti-communism and brutal racialism, that they were out to seize colonies and destroy all traces of national independence in the countries they would conquer (and they actually did intend to conquer the whole world) and wipe out whole nations. The atrocities of the Italian blackshirts in Ethiopia and Japanese militarists in the occupied provinces of China gave a very good idea what fascist rule would have in store for the peoples of Asia and Africa.

The impending war, however, had a complicated, dual nature which affected the colonial world as well; alongside the contradictions between fascism and the popular masses of all countries another important source of international conflict was imperialist rivalry: the powers of the fascist bloc linked their plans for world domination with seizing the possessions and spheres of influence of the European colonialists in Asia and Africa and pushing the United States out of China and Latin America, while the members of the Anglo-French-American bloc were intent on smashing their dangerous rivals in order to monopolise the exploitation of the colonial and dependent countries. In the final analysis it was the anti-fascist and liberation aspect of the Second World War and the Soviet Union's decisive role in smashing the Axis coalition that determined its outcome and historical consequences.

Even prior to the outbreak of the war the international communist movement had a good idea of what its typical features would be like. Just a month before guns began to boom in Europe *The Communist International* published an editorial which said in part: "All recent facts and events clearly show that peace cannot be saved by yielding and making concessions to the aggressor, by the pacifistic chatter about 'peace at all costs'.... Bolsheviks supported and support just wars.... That is why in the struggle for peace they are prepared to support any nation which is fighting for its freedom and independence against the fas-

¹ *The Communist International*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, 1939, p. 256.

cist bandits."¹ When the world war began, people's liberation struggle against the fascist invaders was already under way in various parts of the world. The peoples of Spain, Ethiopia and China had been already shedding their blood for many years in the fight for independence while the world gradually crept towards war.

The anti-fascist, national liberation nature of the war, a feature which the broad masses gradually came to comprehend, began to manifest itself in the initial period of military operations in Europe, that is, from September 1939 to June 1941. One by one the peoples of the European countries which had become victims of aggression, launched a patriotic struggle against the invaders.

It was much more difficult for the peoples of the colonial countries, than it was for the European peoples, to define their attitude to the unfolding world conflict. The reason was that the countries which came out against the fascist bloc possessed colonies and were old and sworn enemies and cruel oppressors of the Eastern peoples. Bourgeois democracy did not extend to the colonies and their population was not always capable of clearly distinguishing between the fascist and the non-fascist colonialists. On top of that nazi propaganda addressed to the population of Asia, Africa and Latin America promised that Germany's victory over the Anglo-American bloc would bring colonial countries their long-awaited liberation. The Japanese militarists conducted their propaganda under the slogans: "Asia for Asians" and "Drive the white barbarians out of Asia".

Many leaders of the national movement hoped that the war against the Axis powers would prompt the metropolitan countries to make important concessions to the colonial peoples or at least give them clear assurances that their national aspirations would be fulfilled some time in the future. But these were futile hopes. The policy of the colonial powers objectively fostered the growth of pro-Japanese and pro-German illusions and undermined the formation of a national anti-fascist front in the colonies which would have readied the peoples for the fight against the aggressors.

The progressive forces in the oppressed countries had to possess a particularly high degree of maturity in order cor-

¹ *The Communist International*, 1939, No. 7, p. 8 (in Russian).

rectly to evaluate the complicated situation. This was not easy for the communist movement in the colonial world, which was still in the process of formation in some countries. It called for good vision and a clear idea of all the aspects of the new international situation in order to surmount national narrowness and realise that the prospect for a national liberation struggle in any country was inseparable from the future of the whole world, and, consequently, from the outcome of the war, i.e., that it was by no means the same for the peoples of all countries what side would emerge victorious from it.

The most important and complex task was to ascertain the nature of the war and correctly assess each of the coalitions which were involved in it. The dual nature of the war and the diplomatic agreements between the USSR and Germany (August 1939) and the USSR and Japan (April 1941) in no way implied "peaceful coexistence" between them in the field of ideology, the termination of anti-fascist propaganda or rejection of slogan calling for the defence of democracy against the fascist threat. That, however, was the mistake which the leaders of some Communist parties made at the time, and especially inexperienced Communist parties of the East.

In the first days of the war the Communist parties of India, Malaya, Indochina and some other Eastern countries issued statements which clearly reflected the mood of the broad masses of the colonial world still incapable of realising that the aspirations of all peoples to national independence not only did not contradict the tasks pursued in the struggle against the fascist oppression, but directly depended on the outcome of this struggle. Condemning both groups of belligerents they did not disclose the specific dual nature of the war and refused to support the Anglo-French-American bloc.¹ Even in Indochina which was clearly threatened by Japanese aggression, the Communist Party declared in the decisions of the Sixth Plenary Meeting of its Central Committee in November 1939 that it had given up the pre-war tactic (from 1936 to 1939) which correctly implied that the struggle against the fascist threat was the primary task

¹ For details see: *The Awakening of the Oppressed*, Moscow, 1968, p. 435 (in Russian).

of the national liberation movement.¹ In November 1939 the Communist Party of India issued an appeal in which it said that the military crisis should be used to intensify the struggle against Britain's domination. "With the beginning of the war," it said, "our national movement has entered a new phase. Unprecedented opportunities for... delivering a decisive blow at the mighty stronghold of world reaction have presented themselves."²

When the war began some sections of the population in the colonial and dependent countries were disposed to stay out of the conflict between the great powers. But it was clear to many Communists and other democratic leaders in the oppressed countries of the East, that a passive or negative attitude to the war was untenable. The acute global crisis prompted them to adopt a definite and principled stand on the matter. Neither did the popular masses in the colonies failed to draw certain lessons from the determined struggle of the Communists of all countries for a united anti-fascist front and the Soviet Union's long diplomatic struggle for collective security i.e., for a combined rebuff to the fascist aggressors. The Burmese Dobama Asiayone Party, in a statement issued following the outbreak of the war by its Communist-dominated working committee underlined: "We condemn Fascism not only when it suits our convenience, but always, because it is in contradiction to... principles and ideals we stand for."³ The Communist Party of the Philippines also campaigned for a fight against the fascist menace. Between 1938 and 1941 this party and the mass democratic organisations it supported exposed the pan-Asiatic propaganda and the intrigues of fascist (German and Spanish) agents in the Philippines, and demanded that the US Government should stop deliveries of war materials to Japan. In Indonesia a clearly defined patriotic and anti-fascist stand was adopted by the influential Gerindo Party which co-operated with the Communists (although the Com-

¹ See: A. P. Shiltova and V. F. Mordvinov, *The National Liberation Movement in Vietnam (1858-1945)*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 138-39 (in Russian).

² *The Communist International*, 1940, No. 5, p. 127 (in Russian).

³ John F. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*, Ithaca, New York, 1958, p. 415.

munist Party had not yet been re-built as an organisation). "The momentous events which have shaken the world," declared Gerindo, referring to the beginning of the war, "are not a result of a clash between peoples or between Asia and the West, but between democracy and fascism."¹ In the spring of 1941 a group of Communists and members of Gerindo set up an underground centre called the Anti-Fascist People's Movement (Geraf).

Mass arrests in all British and French colonies seriously disorganised the work of the Communist parties in that crucial period. But gradually, in the course of 1940, the Communist parties resumed their work and, what was particularly important, more clearly defined their tactical line. Among other things this was also due to the overt and steady expansion of fascist aggression in Europe (the rout of France) and in Asia (the entry of Japanese troops into Indochina).

The Communist Party of Malaya, for instance, adopted a programme of the national anti-imperialist front which set two tasks: liberation from British rule and the fight against the aggression of Japanese imperialism. Towards the end of 1940 the Communist Party of Malaya shifted the emphasis in its work among the masses from anti-British to anti-Japanese propaganda. In Syria and the Lebanon the Communist parties supported the revolts of the hungry which flared up spontaneously in February 1941 in order to give them an anti-fascist orientation (against the Italo-German and Pétain's authorities). The Indochinese Communist Party condemned the September capitulation of the Vichy colonial authorities to Japan and called on the people to fight against the Vichyites and the Japanese invaders.² In the spring of 1941 the Communist Party began to form clandestine national salvation societies. They united diverse sections of Vietnamese patriots who were prepared to fight against the bloc of French and Japanese colonialists. In May 1941 the Viet-minh (Independence) League was formed with Ho Chi Minh as Chairman.

¹ L. Demin, *Japanese Occupation of Indonesia*, Moscow, 1963, p. 59 (in Russian).

² *The Communist International*, 1940, Nos. 10-11, p. 64 (in Russian).

The Communist Party of China kept to its policy of united anti-Japanese front which it adopted after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, and conducted its struggle under a slogan calling for the undeviating observance of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People and promotion of democracy. In an appeal issued in 1940 the CPC Central Committee wrote: "It is necessary to do away with all friction, settle the relations between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang, remove the threat of civil war and strengthen the united anti-Japanese national front. All our people under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek should wage a defensive war to the end."¹ The CPC did not slacken efforts to preserve national unity believing that a split of the united front would present the greatest danger for China. Even when the Kuomintang troops attacked detachments of the 4th Army in January 1941, the CPC would not be provoked and abstained from an armed conflict. The attack evoked a sharp protest from broad democratic circles in China. Beginning with the spring of 1941 Chiang Kai-shek was compelled to relax his anti-communist campaign. On its part the CPC leadership declared that it would not deviate from the united front policy: "Of the two major contradictions in China the contradiction between the Chinese and Japanese nations is still the basic one and the contradiction between the classes at home is subordinate."²

In all the colonial and dependent countries anti-fascist and liberatory slogans filled the people with the hope that the war would free them from colonial dependency. These slogans inspired people to insist that right there and then, in the course of the war, the colonial authorities give tangible proof of their readiness to comply with the demands of the times.

The working committee of the Indian National Congress passed a resolution condemning fascist aggression. But at the same time it declared that the party could support Britain in the war only if India would be assured of indepen-

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-44.

² Directive of the CC CPC to Party organisations of May 8, 1941. See: "A Review of the Repulse of the Second Anti-Communist Upsurge" in: Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, London, 1954, p. 236.

dence after the war and that while it was going a government responsible to the Legislative Assembly would be set up in the country.

Similar demands were made by patriotic organisations in Burma and Indonesia.

But the colonialists' refusal to make concessions had an immediate impact on attitude of the population to the war. In October 1940 Gandhi proclaimed a campaign of civil disobedience. Many Indonesian patriots, seeing that the Netherlands would not yield concessions, began to think of winning independence with Japan's help. In Burma, too, many people favoured co-operation with Japan. Some were sincere patriots who while not wanting a political bloc with Japanese imperialism, believed that the tactic of temporary alliance even with an aggressive fascist power could be used in the interests of liberating the country from British imperialism. A similar line was adopted by some members of the leadership of the Communist Party of Burma, including the General Secretary of its Central Committee Aung San.

In that period individual functionaries of the patriotic movement in many other colonies and dependent countries made the same political miscalculation. It was only after some time that they realised the danger of their error and rectified it.

THE COMMUNISTS IN VANGUARD OF RESISTANCE

The international situation changed sharply after nazi Germany's attack on the USSR and the formation of the Soviet-Anglo-American anti-fascist military coalition. The Soviet Union's entry into the war amplified its liberatory, anti-fascist character. The tenacity of the Soviet people in their resistance to the nazi hordes became an example and a source of inspiration for the Resistance fighters in the occupied countries.

The correlation of social forces in the colonial world assumed more definite contours. Some Communist parties, the Indochinese, for instance, adopted special decisions revising their attitude to the world war which they now qualified as an anti-fascist war and not an imperialist one. Solidarity with the Soviet people and their allies became a slogan

understandable to millions of oppressed people. On July 7, 1941, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China published a declaration which said: "Our people must know that the war which the Soviet people are waging is not only for the protection of the USSR, but also for the protection of China, for the protection of freedom and independence of all peoples. The Soviet Union's victory or defeat will be either a victory or defeat for China, a victory or defeat of democracy and freedom, independence and liberation, truth and justice, science and civilisation of all peoples."¹

The new international situation which took shape after the beginning of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people provided a powerful impetus to the Resistance movement in all countries occupied by the armies of the Axis powers.

But in the Japanese-occupied Asian countries, the initial period of the world war was marked by utter lack of unity, particularly among the national bourgeoisie. The Communists were the first to find their bearings. They organised and led the Resistance movement in the majority of the occupied countries. "The vanguard of the working class," ran an editorial in *The Communist International*, "is fully aware that it is up to working class to awaken and activate all sections of the population, to rally them together in the struggle against the invaders and strengthen the united national front from day to day."²

In Vietnam the Independence League headed by the Communist Party addressed a call for united action to all sections of the population and also the French supporters of de Gaulle prepared to fight against the Japanese invaders and the Vichy Administration.

Malayan Communists formed several Resistance groups in the very first days of the Japanese invasion and then raised four guerrilla units. No other anti-Japanese movement, except the one headed by Communists, was ever formed in Malaya because the local bourgeoisie was inclined to collaborate with the invaders. The Communists organised a militant

¹ M. Kapitsa, *Soviet-Chinese Relations*, Moscow, 1958, p. 302 (in Russian).

² *The Communist International*, 1942, Nos. 3-4, p. 6 (in Russian).

anti-Japanese underground in the Philippines and Burma and participated in the movement against the invaders in Indonesia. Under Communist leadership the struggle against Japanese imperialists continued in their old colony Korea and in the long-captured regions of China, forming a component of the common front of anti-fascist Resistance of the peoples of Eastern Asia.

In colonies and dependencies whose peoples had not experienced the horrors of fascist enslavement, the atmosphere of a general political upsurge which reigned during the war wrought a change in their social psychology. People became increasingly aware that their future was closely connected with the future of the peoples of the whole world, with the future of those who either on the field of battle or in the course of dangerous underground struggle were prepared to undergo sufferings and privations in order to destroy fascism—the ugliest and the most dangerous offspring of the imperialist system. In April 1942 the Communist party of Syria and the Lebanon issued an appeal which said: "There are signs that the Arabs are beginning to realise the true substance of fascism and its hostility towards the national liberation movement.... It is the duty of the Syrians, Lebanese and all the peoples of the Arab countries to provide every assistance to the forces fighting against fascism."¹

After Germany's attack on the USSR, the Communist Party of India declared that the world war was a people's war and considered it necessary to support the military efforts of the anti-fascist coalition. "Today patriotism and national interests demand of the people a united and determined resistance against the fascist aggression which is threatening our country," the Communist Party stated. "The Communists... will support and augment any military measure that strikes a blow at the enemy and at the same time contributes to the defence of the people."²

After the Soviet Army routed the German armies on the Volga and then on the Kursk Salient, a profound change took place in the international political situation which also stimulated the liberation struggle of the people's in the occu-

¹ *The Communist International*, 1942, No. 7, pp. 66-67.

² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

pied countries. Fresh forces began to pour into the Resistance movement. People who had been demoralised by the offensives of the Japanese and German armies now saw for themselves that the rout of these seemingly invincible forces was not far away. In an article on the occasion of the 1943 May Day *The Communist International* wrote: "Today the working people and the peoples of all countries have only one common enemy—fascism. Today there is only one question which demands a solution—the destruction of Hitlerism." The journal emphasised: "Effective anti-fascist unity of nations cannot be achieved spontaneously. A decisive role in the struggle for its establishment is played by the purposeful organising effort of the active anti-fascists by their audacity and self-sacrifice."¹

The Resistance movement in the Eastern countries began to grow in depth and width. Gradually it acquired the nature of a national liberation movement designed not only to drive out the fascist invaders, but also to assert the right to independence from any foreign rulers. Although internal class contradictions made themselves felt in the course of the anti-Japanese struggle, they receded into the background in that period. The main purpose of the political course steered by the Communist parties in the occupied countries was to establish and consolidate a united front of all anti-imperialist forces. As they worked to achieve this common goal the Communist parties formulated their own concrete tactical line according to the situation in each country.

DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

As early as 1935, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, taking into account the aggravation of the world situation that called for increasing flexibility and independence of individual Communist parties, pointed out that the ECCI would have "to proceed, in deciding any question, from the concrete situation and specific conditions obtaining in each particular country, and as a rule to avoid direct intervention in internal organizational matters of the Communist Parties".²

¹ *Ibid.*, 1943, No. 4, pp. 4, 10.

² *Seventh World Congress...*, *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

The Second World War increased the differences in the situation in individual countries. Gradually it became apparent that the Comintern which had played an immense, truly historic role, could no longer remain the sole organisational form of the unity of the Communists of the whole world. New forms of co-operation and cohesion of the contingents of the world communist movement were required. In a resolution on this question adopted on May 15, 1943, the Presidium of the ECCI noted the historic service of the Communist International and stressed: "Long before the war it already became more and more clear that with the increasing complications of the internal as well as international relations of the various countries, any sort of international centre was bound to encounter insuperable obstacles in attempting the solution of the problems facing the working-class movement of each particular individual country."

"The deep differences in the historic paths of development of the various countries of the world, the differences of character and even of the contradiction in their social orders, the differences in the level and tempo of their economic and political development, and finally the differences in the degree of consciousness and organisation of their workers, conditioned the different problems which faced the working class of each particular country."¹

Reckoning with all these factors as well as the enhanced political maturity of the Communist parties and their leading cadres the ECCI proposed that the Communist International should be dissolved.² The motion was supported by the affiliated parties, including the Communist parties of the East. A relevant resolution adopted by the Communist Party of Syria and the Lebanon said: "There is no doubt that the decision to dissolve the Communist International strengthens the United Nations alliance fighting against Hitlerism The Comintern's decision also facilitates the unification and mobilisation of the masses in each country for the struggle against Hitlerism." Syrian and Lebanese Communists expressed their "profound gratitude to the ECCI and its leaders who in the course of many years held aloft

¹ *Daily Worker*, London, May 24, 1943.

² *The Communist International*, 1943, Nos. 5-6, pp. 8-10 (in Russian).

the banner of struggle against fascism thus rendering an inestimable service to the cause of the freedom of the whole world and the national liberation of the oppressed peoples."¹ A Congress of the Communist Party of India declared: "The Communist Party of India has grown under the banner of the International. The International's discipline and ideology inspired the Party to fight against repressions, slander and attempts to isolate it, and helped it to develop into a major political force serving our country and its people The Congress welcomes the resolution of the ECCI Presidium as a courageous step of the Comintern."²

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China approved the ECCI proposal and emphasised that "the Communist Party of China is thereby relieved from the duties stemming from the Charter and the decisions of the Congresses of the Communist International".³ This emphasis was not accidental. In that period a campaign for the "rectification of style" launched by Mao Tse-tung in 1942 was under way in the CPC. The essence of this campaign was, as Mao Tse-tung put it, "to make the CPC more national". He urged the Party to study "its own specific theory" which was tantamount to a repetition of the slogan "Sinicisation of Marxism"⁴ that Mao had proclaimed back in 1938. Thus, instead of setting the task of creatively applying Marxism by taking specific historical and national features into account, he advanced a premise which actually repudiated the internationalist nature of the Marxist teaching. Instead the Marxist-Leninist theory, CPC members were ordered to study "Mao Tse-tung's ideas"—an eclectic mixture of fragments of Marxist concepts and a vulgar interpretation of the experience of the Chinese revolution. Mao twisted the task of supporting the struggle for national interests that faced the CPC at the time, into making the CPC "more national". This meant only one thing: abetment of the nationalistic sentiments among the Party members, and consolidation of ideology hostile to proletarian internationalism. It was not a question of strug-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴ Mao Tse-tung deleted this phraseology from a collection of his works published at a later date.

gling for the Party's political maturity and independence, but of a dangerous isolation from the world communist movement. The Mao Tse-tung leadership viewed the Comintern's dissolution as a factor facilitating the isolation of the CPC from the fraternal parties. Hence the tenor of the CPC statement concerning the ECCI proposal, a tenor which was clearly at cross purposes with the spirit of international solidarity that permeated the statements of the other parties.

The ECCI Presidium called on all Comintern supporters "to concentrate their energies on whole-hearted support of and active participation in the war of liberation of the peoples and States of the anti-Hitlerite coalition for the speediest defeat of the deadly enemy of the working class and toilers—German Fascism and its associates and vassals."¹ On June 9, 1943, the Presidium published a statement saying that the proposal to dissolve the Comintern had been unanimously approved by all its sections.²

Participation in the Resistance movement became an exceptionally serious test of the political maturity of the Communist parties in the colonies and dependent countries. By then, no German and Italian troops remained any longer in Asia and Africa. But the Japanese still occupied huge areas in the east of Asia and a people's war of liberation with the Communists in the forefront was gaining momentum there.

THE RESULTS OF THE WAR. THEIR IMPACT ON THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN THE EAST

The peoples of Asia and Africa made an important contribution to the great cause of victory over the aggressive fascist bloc.

The Second World War enormously stimulated the national liberation movement of the colonial peoples. The anti-fascist struggle drew millions of people who formerly kept out of politics into vigorous political activity. In the course of the Resistance new patriotic revolutionary organisations emerged, in a number of countries national armed forces

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 23, No. 22, May 29, 1943, p. 170.

² *The Communist International*, 1943, Nos. 5-6, pp. 26-27 (in Russian).

were formed, and people accumulated political, organisational, military and technical experience.

The war had a profound impact on the ideology of the masses in the colonies and dependencies.

In the course of the Resistance movement, which developed in a very complex and contradictory manner in these countries the popular masses could see the true image of the various national parties and groupings and check their programmes and declarations in practice. The outstanding role played by the Communist parties in the Resistance had a particularly great effect on the development of the national liberation struggle. In the grim years of the war the Communists were fully up to the mark; they proved to be not only courageous fighters who spared neither their strength nor their lives in the struggle for the people's cause, but also capable politicians showing the people a correct strategy and tactics depending on conditions in each particular country. The Soviet Union's enormous prestige acquired as a result of its role in routing the fascist bloc enhanced the magnetic force of socialist ideas to an unprecedented degree throughout the world, including the colonial countries in Asia and Africa.

The political experience gained during the war offered further tangible proof to the peoples of these countries of the effectiveness of the strategic line of a united anti-imperialist national front formulated by the international communist movement. For the Communist parties in the colonies and dependencies the ideas and slogans proclaimed by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern were a key to the solution of very complex and responsible problems posed by the difficult wartime conditions. Of course the implementation of the idea of a united front in each given country depended on the introduction of specific tactical measures and encountered numerous and sometimes insurmountable difficulties.

Though the class composition and the character of the forces standing at the head of the anti-imperialist movement were very diverse, they did have certain common features. The movement relied chiefly on the peasantry—with the exception of Malaya where workers comprised the bulk of the partisan army and in Korea where anti-Japanese actions took place predominantly in the cities. There were occupied coun-

tries in Asia, including the occupied part of China, where the regime of terror established by the invaders in cities paralysed strike action and other forms of struggle of the working class, and disrupted links (where they existed) between working-class and peasant organisations. This was one of the specific reasons alongside the more general ones which prevented the proletariat in these countries from making full use of its inherent revolutionary potential in the anti-Japanese Resistance movement.

The situation changed completely after the rout of the Japanese troops in Manchuria by the Soviet Army and Japan's surrender. Working people in China and Vietnam enthusiastically welcomed the revolutionary peasant troops which entered the cities and gave them every support. Everywhere, in Indonesia and Malaya, in Burma and the Philippines, powerful labour unions, many of them headed by Communists, were formed immediately after the abolition of Japanese rule in the cities. In these countries the proletariat began to play a prominent role in politics and opportunities appeared for the formation of a militant alliance of the working class and the peasantry as a reliable nucleus of a united anti-imperialist front. The Communist parties invigorated their activity among the workers and the petty-bourgeois urban and rural strata with the view to strengthening proletarian influence in the national front.

The unprecedented upsurge of the national liberation movement and the development of the class struggle in the course of and as a result of the Second World War helped to bring about an objective political crisis in almost all regions of the East—in the Maghrib, the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, China and Korea. This crisis was conditioned by major international factors: the complete rout of the Axis powers, a sharp decline in the military and economic potential of all imperialist powers with the exception of the United States, the Soviet people's full victory in the Great Patriotic War against Hitlerism and Japanese militarism and the unity of the USSR with all international anti-fascist forces. The political crisis grew and deepened, and in some Asian countries it turned into a revolutionary situation characterised by vigorous activity of the Communist parties and national liberation organisations. In this situation at the

end of the Second World War the colonial rule was liquidated in China, Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam; the peoples of India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, the Philippines and other countries which proclaimed their independence in the first post-war years also took advantage of the domestic and external opportunities which emerged during the political crisis of the war years.

The important thing about the revolutionary situation in the Asian countries was that it appeared in conditions of the mounting political activity of the broad working masses and the increasing influence of the Communist parties, at a time when the fighting peoples had considerable armed forces which in many cases were controlled and even commanded by Communists. This created serious objective and subjective prerequisites both for overthrowing imperialist domination and attaining the goals of a democratic revolution, and for securing the further development of the revolutionary process. Some of the conditions for the future revolutionary development emerged gradually during the preparations for a democratic national liberation revolution. The realisation of these prerequisites depended solely on the consistent achievement of general democratic tasks with the constructive participation of the Communist parties and progressive national revolutionary organisations. Right up to the end of the war and in the initial post-war period, when the solution of general democratic tasks was still on the order of the day of both the dependent countries and those which had cast off the colonial yoke, the Communist parties of these countries, including China, Korea and Vietnam did not come forward with socialist slogans. But when soon afterwards the national-democratic revolution began to develop into a socialist revolution, first in the northern part of Korea, then in China and shortly in Vietnam, this was due to the favourable prerequisites which had begun to take shape in the course of the struggle for national liberation during the Second World War. The Soviet Union's political support and direct assistance played an exceptionally important role in stimulating this process in a number of Asian countries.

The anti-fascist Resistance movement became a truly great school of the strategy and tactics of political struggle.

It showed once again that the popular cause could win only if supported by the organised and conscious movement of the masses themselves. Without this support even the most dauntless revolutionaries would be doomed to failure. Although such momentous gains of the people as the victorious beginning of the national liberation revolutions in Vietnam and Indonesia in August 1945 were accomplished without bloodshed, it was clear that the people were able to proclaim independence only because they had a party-political and military organisation, a competent leadership, because they had accumulated weapons and were prepared to use them in an organised manner to defend their freedom.

The war, naturally, strengthened the national feelings of the peoples whose independence had been trampled upon or was in jeopardy. At the same time the war enriched the peoples with the experience of joint international actions. Le Duan, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, subsequently said: "The victory of the Soviet Union in the war against German and Japanese fascism created exceptionally favourable situation for the victory of our August revolution."¹ The victory over powerful and dangerous enemies in the West and East was a victory of the anti-fascists of all countries. The unity of the progressive democratic and anti-fascist forces of Europe coupled with the decisive participation of the Soviet people and the struggle of oppressed peoples of the colonies and dependent countries—this unity of three forces was the main factor of the rout of fascism. In the postwar years the preservation and development of the unity and cohesion of the anti-imperialist, democratic forces became the main task of the vanguard fighters for national liberation, the task of the entire international working-class and communist movement.

¹ *Pravda*, April 7, 1977.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF COLONIAL SOCIETIES IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE COMINTERN (1920-1927)

M. A. CHESHKOV

As it framed the theory, strategy and tactics of the world communist movement, the Comintern encountered numerous problems relating to an analysis of the social structure of the colonial countries. Its scientific examination of these problems was based on its concept of the national-colonial revolution which it evolved by correlating the fundamental proposition of the Marxist-Leninist theory with the realities of the colonial world.

In investigating how the Comintern developed its scientific approach to an analysis of colonial societies an important place belongs to evaluative characterisations (of society as a whole and classes and revolutions), and the special methodology employed in formulating them.¹

The Comintern's analysis of the colonial societies involved such key issues as the connection between the world capitalist system and the colonial society, the latter's trends of development, its nature (dominating type of relations) and the characteristic features of certain social communities.²

The Comintern's work in this sphere directly reflected the state of the national liberation movement and its level. Depending on its state it is possible to distinguish the following stages of this analysis: the period when the Second Congress was in session (1920), the ensuing period (up to

¹ No special mention is made here of the mutual connection between a scientific analysis and political trends.

² These characteristics are given in general, and of course, the problem calls for a detailed analysis of the conditions in different countries.

1924) and the period from 1925 to 1927. The Second Congress met against the background of an upsurge in the national movements after the Socialist Revolution in Russia and the First World War. The basic factor in the studies between 1920 and 1924 was the steady and very considerable upsurge in the liberation movement in that period, while between 1925 and 1927 the studies took into consideration that the movement had reached its peak in China and the Chinese revolution was then defeated.

* * *

When it began to analyse the social system of the colonial countries in 1920 the Comintern encountered immensely complex problems. There were few special Marxist works on the history and analysis of the socio-economic policy of the eastern countries. It was necessary not only to "apply" Marxist-Leninist theory to the new conditions, but to develop it further and make the most of the opportunities it offered in cognising the complex relations in the colonial and dependent countries.

The discussion, which centered upon the question of the nature of the revolution in the colonies at the Second Congress of the Comintern, disclosed the existence of different approaches towards an assessment of the colonial society.

In his "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions" and in the report to the Second Congress of the Comintern Lenin said that these societies were still dominated by pre-capitalist relations.¹

Judging by the verbatim report of the proceedings M. N. Roy in his speech and *Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Questions* did not define the nature of the relations predominant in colonial societies. But in his analysis of the situation in India he pointed to the rapid growth of industry in British India and referred to the numerical growth of the industrial proletariat and the increased capital investments into this sphere of the economy. He al-

¹ See: V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 149-50); and "The Second Congress of the Communist International" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 242-43).

so spoke of the same "rapid development of the capitalist system" in Egypt, Dutch Indies and China, i.e., in the leading countries of the East.¹

Roy's description of the countries of the East as being "capitalist" was based, indirectly, through the formula of "development", on his specific understanding of the role they played in the world capitalist system. He believed that the relations between the metropolitan countries and their colonies were "the foundation of the entire system of capitalism".² They led to the emergence of capitalist production in the colonies (through the investment of a part of the surplus value created in the metropolitan countries, and through the export of raw materials and the import of commodities) and the formation of a "broad field of exploitation". He maintained that the "several million coloured people" who were drawn into it were exploited with the help of the same methods as the workers in the metropolitan countries. Hence, Roy's estimation of colonial societies as capitalist societies (or rapidly developing in that direction) was a natural result of an approach that regarded imperialism as a simple spread of capitalism in width,³ with corresponding qualitative modifications. In this light the colonial countries appeared to be elements of a world system with no specific laws governing their development.

Lenin's approach to the colonial societies (particularly following the publication of his work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*) was far removed from the concept of the simple spread of capitalism in width. Already before 1916 Lenin, on the basis of his study of diverse paths of capitalist evolution in agriculture, noted the distinction between capitalism in the metropolitan countries ("democratic capitalism") and in the colonies ("Octobrist capitalism").⁴ Later on he described the aspiration of these coun-

¹ See: *The Second Congress of the Communist International. Proceedings...*, Moscow, 1920, p. 118.

² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³ In this respect the *Supplementary Theses* set forth ideas that were close to those contained in Rosa Luxemburg's *Die Akkumulation des Kapitals*.

⁴ See: V. I. Lenin, "To Maxim Gorky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 34, p. 439.

tries to economic independence as a key trend of world development under the conditions of the internationalisation of economic links. He enlarged upon this premise in a polemic with proponents of "economic imperialism". Already prior to 1920 Lenin based his approach to the problem on a characterisation of the colonial countries as special elements in the world capitalist system with a range of important peculiarities, but not at all as objects outside this system included into it only because capitalism in these countries was turning into the dominating formation.

At the Second Congress of the Comintern Lenin made a fresh step in this direction and in analysing the national and colonial question shifted the emphasis from the capitalist system as a whole to its individual "peripheral" elements. This was not in defiance of, but a further development of scientific logic; it was also dictated by the urgent political need precisely to define the forces which in these countries could become participants in the world revolutionary process.

A point of departure common to Lenin's and Roy's views was recognition of world capitalism as an integral socio-economic system. The basic distinction was in their understanding of the position occupied by the colonial societies in this system.

Roy's mistake was that he ignored the nature and peculiarities of these important individual elements of the capitalist system, which, strictly speaking, removed the very concept "system". This approach prevented him from presenting the complex picture of the system of the colonial societies and instead portrayed only a "fundamental", "leading" tendency of development. Since the vehicle of this tendency was the world capitalist system then, according to Roy, the colonial society had a similar origin.

Meanwhile, Lenin's approach to the issue made it possible to discover a vast variety of forms of production relations. Some of them fitted into the framework of pre-capitalist society, while others were outside its limits and constituted relations either transitional to capitalism or directly capitalist. In his report to the Second Congress Lenin noted that peasant relations—feudal and semi-feudal—existed in

the Eastern countries.¹ As he saw it, the feudal relations were personified by both separate individuals and the feudal state. He also noted the important role that was played by merchant capital in these pre-capitalist societies.² The advantage of such an appraisal of social relations was that it took into account both the diversity of forms and the historical features (of the agrarian relations, in particular), and at the same time did not obliterate the connection between these relations and the world capitalist system.

At first glance it might seem that Lenin's analysis was so closely directed at the colonial society, that the latter as such dropped out of the world system. But that was not the case. The only way to comprehend the mechanism of the colonial society's reverse links with the system was by studying this society. While formerly Lenin examined the obvious forms of this connection (export of capital, trade), now he probed its hidden forms, and searched for them where Marx did in his time, i.e., in the specific nature of the agrarian relations.

In the course of the debates the general picture of the colonial society presented in Lenin's report was not substantially modified. The Dutch representative David Wijnkoop remarked that it was necessary to distinguish between foreign and national capitalism in the colonies. M. N. Roy did not make this distinction and that precisely was what created one of the logical prerequisites for characterising the system of the colonial societies as a capitalist system.

Quite naturally, the differences in defining the system of the society and the type of relations predominant in it created distinctions in the evaluation of the role of individual classes and social sections.

The problem of the peasantry became the main issue. In his report Lenin characterised it as a feudal-dependent and feudal-exploited (in different forms) mass, as a social community of the pre-capitalist type. Furthermore, compared with his report to the Second Congress he even emphasised this description in the "Preliminary Draft Theses" by qual-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 242-44.

² *Ibid.*

ifying the peasant movement as a force opposing all manifestations or survivals of feudalism.¹

Accordingly, Lenin regarded the bureaucracy, the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie as the main social opponents of the working masses in such societies.²

Naturally, based on such an approach Lenin's estimation of the peasantry of the backward countries as a vehicle and representative of bourgeois-capitalist relations³ was first and foremost a general theoretical long-term formula. This is apparent even from a comparison of this estimation with another which noted that peasants who were exploited by medieval methods comprised the majority of the population of the Eastern countries.⁴ His appeal for the formation of broad mass organisations of the working people in the East was based on his concept that the bulk of the population in these countries had still not reached the level of a clearly defined class-capitalist differentiation.

The characterisation of the peasantry contained in M. N. Roy's *Supplementary Theses* paid more attention to its dispossession of land and impoverishment than to its "medieval" and "feudal-dependent" conditions of life. He tied in these qualities with the influence of the world capitalist system (ruination of the local industry, the flow of the population into agriculture, impossibility of large-scale emigration) and the concentration of landownership. At the time Roy himself did not identify the pauperisation of the peasantry with its proletarianisation. He noted that "owing to the imperialist policy of preventing industrial development in the colonies, a proletarian class, in the strict sense of the word, could not come into existence there until recently".⁵ Roy believed that the peasants were being dispossessed of land because of the rapid concentration of land in the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 148-49.

² See: V. I. Lenin, "Notes at a Meeting of Delegates to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 150.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 241-42.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Material for the Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 202.

⁵ *The Second Congress of the Communist International...*, p. 115.

hands of big landowners, financial capitalists and the state,¹ and this could be interpreted only as a partial coincidence of this process with proletarianisation.

A more noticeable interpretation of the peasants being dispossessed of land and their impoverishment as an indication of their growing proletarianisation was voiced during the debates. K. Radek advanced the formula "proletarian peasants",² and Maring, in a reference to the peasants of Dutch Indies said that although they "are in possession of their land, but nevertheless, they are becoming more and more proletarian".³ A. Sultan Zade in his speech portrayed the peasants as "the sole producers", a mass of "pauper proletarians",⁴ and so forth.

Inasmuch as all those who shared this point of view simultaneously noted the undeveloped state of the proletariat in the colonies, such an interpretation turned peasantry into a force which in a way replaced the proletariat, all the more so because the peasantry was counterposed to the capitalist system as a whole, and not merely to its own feudal lords.

Although the drawing together of peasantry and proletariat (or to be precise, the transformation of the first into the second) was more emphatically expounded in the debates than in the *Supplementary Theses*, it was based on Roy's interpretation of the links between the metropolitan countries and the colonies. His concept of a "broad field of exploitation" erased the difference not only between the peasant and the colonial worker, but also between the peasant and the proletarian of the metropolitan country.

Since the analysis of concrete social communities (classes, sections, groups) was still quite inadequate, the Congress was unable to define the correlation of social and national communities. Logically, however, Roy's standpoint

¹ *Ibid.* It should be mentioned, however, that proletarianisation aspect is played up more prominently in the *Supplementary Theses* inasmuch as concentration of landed property is connected with the strengthening not only of "landowners and capitalists" but of "landowner-capitalists". But this may have been a misprint in the hastily prepared 1921 edition.

² *The Second Congress, Op. cit.*, p. 127.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

was definitely close to Bukharin's "self-determination of the working people" and, in fact, substituted the national entity with a social one.

The lack of a uniform interpretation of the nature of the colonial societies naturally resulted in sharply different approaches to the problem of conducting a differentiated analysis of individual colonial countries. Lenin's report characterised countries (and national movements) of a single type because it defined a single type of predominating relations. In Roy's *Supplementary Theses* the countries of the East were in effect divided into two qualitatively different types, in keeping with the idea that there were both pre-capitalist countries and countries that had entered the stage of capitalist development (India, China, Egypt and Dutch Indies). Lenin's differentiation of countries and movements was a formulation of diverse concrete variants of the same type, while Roy's differentiation looked like a formulation of different variants on the basis of two contradictory types. Subsequently this distinction in the approach to a differentiated analysis of colonial societies and, consequently, to defining the types of revolutionary movements became extremely pronounced. It is necessary to emphasise the very important fact that Lenin by no means regarded his approach to the colonial world as an alternative to a concrete approach to a given country. Priority was given to a summary approach chiefly because it disclosed the objective unity of the oppressed East as an anti-imperialist revolutionary and nationalist force.

Dialectically combining an analysis of the system (capitalist) and its "peripheral" (pre-capitalist) elements, Lenin laid the foundation for a theoretical elaboration of the concept of non-capitalist development. He focussed particular attention on agrarian relations and upon studying their specific features in the historical (the role of the state) and contemporary (the role of commercial capital) plane. As distinct from M. N. Roy, Lenin, without identifying national communities with social, opened broad vistas for examining their interdependence. Finally, his approach which recognised the diversity of the forms of relations in the colonial societies made it possible to study regions and countries without losing sight of their typological identity.

After its Second Congress the Comintern paid increasing attention to the colonial countries and their social features, but was unable to keep abreast of the events in the East, a fact repeatedly mentioned in the documents of the Comintern and at its congresses.

The main materials whose analysis makes it possible to ascertain the Comintern's approach to Eastern societies in that period were the special report ("The Eastern Question"), "Theses on the Eastern Question" which were adopted at the Fourth Congress (November-December 1922) and D. Manuilsky's report on the national and colonial question at the Fifth Congress in May 1924. The problem of colonial societies was also partially examined in the materials of the Third Congress (June-July 1921), in the debates on certain sections of the draft programme of the Comintern at the Fifth Congress (June-July 1924) and in greater detail in the individual sections of "Sketches of the Agrarian Programme" which were discussed at the Fourth Congress.

In this period problems of colonial societies were also extensively discussed in scientific literature. By 1920 several works were already published on this subject. The most important, in our opinion, are those by M. Pavlovich (Veltman) and K. Troyanovsky.¹ An interesting collection, *The Colonial East*, edited by A. Sultan Zade,² and also works

¹ M. Pavlovich-M. Volonter (Mikhail Veltman), *Questions of Colonial and National Policy and the Third International (Soviet Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Turkey)*, Moscow, 1920; K. Troyanovsky, *The East and Revolution*, Moscow, 1918 (both in Russian).

The first work contains an interesting analysis of the social structure which examines the role of petty and medium traders standing on the verge of pauperisation (p. 56).

The second work characterises the social structures of contemporary Eastern societies as "pre-capitalist" (p. 67) and points out "the relative weakness and lack of organisation of native capitalism" (p. 68). In the author's opinion this structure, in combination with the proletarian revolution in the West and "primitive communism" in the agrarian relations, enabled the peoples of the East to bypass the capitalist stage of development. This was the first attempt to outline the theory of non-capitalist development and it deserves particular attention.

² A. Sultan Zade, *The Economy and the Problems of National Revolutions in the Countries of the Middle and the Far East*, Moscow, 1921, and *Contemporary Persia*, 1922; M. Pavlovich (Volonter),

by M. Pavlovich, V. Gurko-Kryazhin, K. Troyanovsky and other authors were published shortly after the Second Congress of the Comintern. The publication of the series entitled *The Revolutionary Movements in the Countries of the East* was launched in 1923.

These works raised the same theoretical problems concerning the colonial societies that were discussed by the Comintern. But they contained a vast amount of factual material drawn not only from Western publications, but was also obtained as a result of a direct and concrete study of the colonial countries, for many of the authors lived and worked in the Eastern countries and studied the situation on the spot. A. Sultan Zade, V. Gurko-Kryazhin and other authors began to work on the political aspect of the historical features of the Eastern countries and to compare data about the different regions. Since then, when examining the Comintern's attitude to the East it has been necessary to take into account the appearance of scientific Marxist literature and compare it with the Comintern's documents.

After 1920 the tendency to examine colonial societies as developing within the framework of world capitalism but on their own specific basis became predominant in the documents and materials of the Comintern.

For instance during the discussion of the draft programme at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, there was a polemic with the Social-Democrats who denied the existence of super-profits (colonial profits). In the draft the latter were ascribed to the existence of different levels of labour productivity and "the powerful means of state".¹

Although the draft overlooked the export of capital² and did not link colonial profits with agrarian relations in the colonies, such an interpretation of the connection between

Economic Development and the Agrarian Question in Persia in the 20th Century, Moscow, 1921, and *Revolutionary Turkey*, Moscow, 1921; V. A. Gurko-Kryazhin, *A History of the Revolution in Turkey*, Moscow, 1923; *The Colonial East*, Moscow, 1924; K. Troyanovsky, *Contemporary Egypt*, Moscow, 1925 (all in Russian).

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, 1924, No. 50, p. 509.

² This is particularly manifest in scientific works in which the process of colonial subjugation is in fact reduced to commodity relations. [See, for example, M. Pavlovich (Volonter), *Economic Development...*, pp. 22-26].

the world capitalist system and the colonial society was more correct and realistic than M. N. Roy's approach to the question at the Second Congress.

The logical course of events resulting from the development of capitalism in many Eastern countries after the First World War, and also the political necessity arising from the ebb of the revolutionary tide in Europe focussed the Comintern's attention primarily on this process and its connection with the world capitalist system.

In the Comintern's documents of this period, the accent is no longer on defining the nature of the colonial societies, but on studying capitalism as the main trend of development in the colonial countries. In a resolution on an ECCI report the Third Congress noted "the vigorous development of capitalism in the East, particularly in India and in China",¹ and consequently was able to speak about "the survivals of the feudal disabilities"² (the Second Congress had referred to the "domination of pre-capitalist relations"). The Fourth Congress also mentioned the "growth of native productive forces"³. The emphasis made on the word *native* clearly indicated the fact that already at the time the Comintern was referring to local, national capitalism and not to capitalism in general (as was interpreted in 1920). Even M. N. Roy drew a fairly clear division at the Fourth Congress between two kinds of capitalism, by drawing a line between capitalism which was developing as a result of the export of capital, and "native capitalism".⁴

No such division was made in his concrete study of the subject. For instance in one of his works M. N. Roy examined such factors as the import of machines, their production inside the country, the ratio between imported and locally produced commodities, as symptoms of the growth of "native capitalism" alone, even though they were also indicative of certain processes of the penetration of foreign capital into the Indian economy.

¹ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1921, p. 10.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, London, 1922, p. 54.

⁴ *Bulletin of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1922, No. 19, p. 23.

This concept of the "capitalist transformation of the East" was widely propagated in the popular scientific literature of those years. In some works it was connected with the industrialisation of the Eastern countries and in others with the strengthening of commercial capital which was developing into industrial capital. The first version was expounded by Roy who proclaimed that the industrial revolution was already under way in India and advancing at a giant pace. According to A. Sultan Zade, this industrialisation assumed such dimensions that it could "overturn all the social relations which had been established in the course of centuries between Europe and the East".¹

The second, and a more moderate version of this concept was based on the theory of commercial capitalism presented in the historical works of M. Pokrovsky and economic works of A. Bogdanov and I. Stepanov. As explained by G. Safarov, an adherent of this theory, the essence of I. Stepanov's interpretation of commercial capitalism was that commercial capital represented a "new branch of economic activity—trade in order to accumulate" and in historical terms conformed to the stage of transition from simple commodity production to capitalism.²

This theory was widely supported in scientific literature, and being more realistic than the others it was also in the main incorporated in some of the Comintern's documents.

In its "Theses on the Eastern Question" the Fourth Congress attributed the accelerated development of native capitalism to the "weakening of imperialist pressure in the colonies" during the war and to inter-imperialist rivalry.³ This explanation did not exhaust the substance of the problem, but it indicated that capitalist development in the colonies was not regarded as irreversible. The above Theses indirectly referred to the temporary nature of capitalist development. The Fourth Congress (as compared with the

¹ *The Colonial East*, p. 224 (in Russian).

² See: G. Safarov, "The National and Colonial Question at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern", *The New East*, 1922, No. 2, p. 66 (in Russian).

³ *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress...*, *Op. cit.*, p. 53.

Third) more realistically estimated the type of colonial society and pointed out that its capitalist development had a "feudal basis". Capitalist relations in that society were described as predominant, yet existing in "bastard" and "intermediate" forms springing from the domination of commercial capital.

Formulated in this way the theory of commercial capitalism only outwardly resembled a development of Lenin's premise concerning the leading role commercial capital played in these countries. Lenin confined these relations to the pre-capitalist society, while in 1920-24 they were interpreted as an indication that the colonial society had already entered the early phase of capitalism. The acceptance of the commercial capitalism version was therefore an attempt to reconcile Lenin's definition of these societies as being on the whole pre-capitalist, and the extreme versions of the concept of capitalist transformation of the East.

The concept of commercial capitalism, which was applied with some use to explain concrete socio-economic phenomena, at the same time obscured the similarity of colonial societies in the sense that as a whole they were objects of imperialist oppression, with pre-capitalist relations predominant in them.

M. N. Roy told the Fourth Congress that the Second Congress's concept of the homogeneity of all countries of the East had to be discarded as erroneous.¹ He suggested that they should be divided into three categories, the first including countries "nearing to most highly developed capitalism", the second, countries where "feudalism is still the backbone of society", and the third where "feudal patriarchy is the social order".² The exception (India) became a rule here, while the basic type (the second category) was regarded as a variation. In the same way M. N. Roy differentiated the liberation movement, too.

If Roy's viewpoint had been accepted it would have naturally resulted in a revision of the Second Congress's strategic and political decisions, and particularly of its attitude to bourgeois democracy and the revolutionary elements among the bourgeoisie.

¹ *Bulletin of the Fourth Congress...*, *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

² *Ibid.*

Hence Roy's characterisation, transferred to the level of social communities, was resolutely opposed in that period. The reason was obvious: it could directly affect the realisation of the Comintern's policy of supporting national liberation movements which at the time were led by non-proletarian elements.

The Comintern considerably broadened its analysis of social groups and strata, and although the peasantry still remained the main object of study it ceased to be the only one. The Comintern turned its attention to other classes and also to such specific sections as the bureaucracy, the intelligentsia and the military, i.e., groups which had not yet been analysed by the Second Congress, and, in general, were drawn with difficulty into the orbit of a Marxist scientific study.

The concept "capitalist transformation of the East" in Roy's extreme interpretation (as distinct from his views in 1920), did not devote special attention to the peasantry because the main emphasis was shifted to the development of the proletariat, while the stratification of the peasantry was portrayed as a natural and inevitable result of capitalist development.

The Third Congress described the peasantry as a mass chiefly exploited by "agrarian" methods and therefore belonging in the sphere of pre-capitalist relations. It qualified the peasantry as an object of the imperialist military and national oppression, of the capitalist exploitation by foreign and native bourgeoisie and also by representatives of feudal forces.¹ It is clear that in defining the social image of the peasantry the Comintern at its Third Congress adhered to Lenin's interpretation of this question in 1920.

The Comintern's documents of that period manifest a desire to reckon with the historical peculiarities of the agrarian relations when analysing the nature of landownership in the East. The Agrarian Commission concerned with this problem at the Fourth Congress distinguished two basic types of landowners—the "feudal lords" and the "feudal

¹ See: *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress of the Communist International, Moscow, 1921*, p. 40.

landowners".¹ But in the "Theses on the Eastern Question" the Fourth Congress refrained from forthright definitions, preferring the broader terms "bureaucrat" and "landowner",² much more suitable to the specific nature of the agrarian relations in the East which Lenin mentioned in 1920. It was clear that the Agrarian Commission wanted to point out the changes taking place in the character of the direct subject of land property (the feudal landowner), but it obviously ignored the historical peculiarities of agrarian relations in the East. In an effort to ascertain the role played by specific features in the agrarian system of the colonial countries, the Comintern in that period disregarded the tendency towards the capitalist transformation of land property, a theme which was taken up in scientific works rather than in official documents. This created a gap between the definition of society (whether it was "capitalist" or becoming one) and an analysis of agrarian relations. Later this gap was closed when the colonial societies were characterised as feudal.

The Comintern realistically appraised the national bourgeoisie. Perhaps the most important for the Comintern's approach to the national bourgeoisie and, generally speaking, to the social structure as a whole, was the fact that the "Theses on the Eastern Question" (the Fourth Congress) qualified the upper classes of native society as semi-feudal and semi-bourgeois.³ Close to it was the "upper level of the bourgeoisie" which M. N. Roy delineated at the Fourth Congress⁴ and then at the Fifth Congress⁵ although in his opinion these groups had a clearly defined capitalist character. According to M. N. Roy the "upper level" of the bourgeoisie was formed as a result of the contacts between these groups with foreign capital. This aspect of the formation of extremely narrow bourgeois communities was underscored by A. Sultan Zade who believed that it was the basis of a contradiction between the upper level which was drawn into the sphere of exploitation by foreign capital, and the rest of the bourgeoisie, still untouched by "super-

¹ Bulletin of the Fourth Congress..., 1922, No. 27, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, No. 32, p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*, No. 32, p. 18.

⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 19, p. 24.

⁵ *International Press Correspondence*, 1924, No. 50, p. 519.

capitalist trusts".¹ In that period, however these interesting observations about the formation of narrow mature groups both in the bourgeoisie itself and at its junction with the landed proprietors were not further elaborated in theory.

As regards the political role of the intelligentsia, the Fourth Congress defined it as a national-revolutionary force² capable of expressing the "will of a nation for political independence".³ It was recognised that the political potentialities of the intelligentsia could be used only at the stage of the national revolution.⁴ This assessment was a result of the still inadequate study of the intelligentsia of the colonial societies, and was more in the nature of an estimation of its role in a typical bourgeois society.

Popular scientific works about the intelligentsia, written by authors closely connected with the Comintern, contained information and concepts which more vigorously underscored the considerable social flexibility of this group and sections of the population closely associated with it. Even the concise data they contained showed that in India, for example, there were masses of unemployed and declassed intellectuals,⁵ and in Turkey there were civil servants and office employees who were semi-proletarian in terms of their social status,⁶ and so forth. All this provided an opportunity for comprehending the revolutionary potentialities of the intelligentsia on the basis of its actual position in a colonial society.

At the time the Comintern focused its attention not only on the intelligentsia but also on the bureaucratic and military-bureaucratic sections.

In its documents the Comintern usually characterised these bureaucratic groups as "representatives" of feudal or bourgeois forces. With all the immaturity of the bourgeoisie and the disintegration of the feudal forces (Lenin mentioned

¹ A. Sultan Zade, *Economics and the Problems of National Revolutions...*, pp. 11, 12.

² *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, London, 1922, p. 58.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵ M. Pavlovich, *India in Struggle...*, p. 61 (in Russian).

⁶ V. A. Gurko-Kryazhin, *A History of the Revolution in Turkey*, pp. 43-44 (in Russian).

this in 1920),¹ the class nature of these "representatives" and their concrete links became the subject of debates. In general, the tendency was to regard them as representatives of "moribund feudal groups", "feudal bureaucracy" or "feudal militarism" (terminology used by the Fourth Congress).²

An important role in propounding the problems of bureaucracy, just as with respect to an analysis of the intelligentsia, was played by popular scientific literature. As early as in 1921 A. Sultan Zade described the emergence of the contemporary bureaucracy (in the Middle East) as a social shift of no less importance than the formation of the bourgeoisie there.³ According to V. Gurko-Kryazhin's concept, the bureaucracy (a "class of civil servants") in Turkey, in view of the absence of the bourgeoisie there fulfilled the latter's functions.⁴ He characterised the "unemployed intelligentsia" which came to power in 1908 and the semi-proletarian "class of civil servants" as "potential bourgeoisie" and not as "representatives" of the national bourgeoisie inasmuch as the latter did not exist.⁵

A. Khodorov used the example of Chinese militarism to show the heterogeneous origin of the officers corps,⁶ while V. Vilensky-Sibiryakov raised the question of militarism being a uniform (military-administrative) system which he called "militarised mandarinism".⁷

Examining all these social groups the Comintern invariably faced the problem of assessing the general level of class

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Material for the Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 202.

² At the Fourth Congress only the Dutch delegate Van Ravenstein voiced the thought, which was confirmed by historical rather than by contemporary facts, that the bureaucracy was a relatively independent group. (*Bulletin of the Fourth Congress...*, 1922, No. 19, p. 5.)

³ *The Colonial East*, p. 12.

⁴ V. A. Gurko-Kryazhin, *A History of the Revolution in Turkey*, p. 42 (in Russian).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁶ A. Y. Khodorov, "New Paths in the History of China", *The New East*, Moscow, 1924, No. 6, p. XXXIII (in Russian).

⁷ V. Vilensky-Sibiryakov, "The Prospect of Revolutionary Development in China", *The New East*, Moscow, 1922, No. 2, p. 319 (in Russian).

differentiation in the countries of the colonial East. The concept of commercial capitalism, most widespread at the time, signified a rejection of the accepted pattern of class dualism (bourgeoisie—proletariat). An open confrontation over this issue occurred at the Fifth Congress when Roy demanded a precise social classification of all groups and sections which were the carriers of national identity.¹ Roy suggested that this should be done in line with his concept of the “capitalist transformation of the East”, i. e., on the basis of the European pattern of class relations. The Comintern’s position on this issue was expressed by D. Manuilsky in the “Concluding Speech on the National Question”.

Without denying that there could be class conflicts “in one colonial country or another where the development of the productive forces has already created profound class contradictions”, Manuilsky rejected the interpretation of classes and class conflicts as a typical phenomenon characterising the state of the colonial movement in all the imperialist-enslaved countries.²

Thus the Comintern used the concept of classes formulated for the capitalist society on the theoretical plane, i. e., from the standpoint of the main historical tendency; at the same time the social entities obtaining in the colonial countries were not regarded as having attained a similar degree of maturity. This attitude was logical enough because it regarded capitalist development as the leading trend in the development of the colonial countries. At the same time it implied a continuous study of the specific features in the process of the formation of capitalist-type classes, features rooted in the colonial conditions and the historical peculiarities of the Eastern countries. That, as we see it, was the purpose of the analysis of the agrarian relations contained in the “Theses on the Eastern Question” of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, and the examination of individual social entities—the bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy and the military—in scientific literature.

The Comintern’s understanding of social and national problems continued to rest on the realistic conclusion drawn by the Second Congress, namely that at the given stage the

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, 1924, No. 50, pp. 518-19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 608.

working masses did not come forth as the bearers of the right of nations to self-determination.¹ The interpretation of this proposition at the Fifth Congress, however, was not without certain contradictions, because in an analysis of the role played by the bourgeoisie, let alone other dominating classes, it laid greater emphasis on the bourgeoisie’s inability to assume this mission, and viewed the corresponding role played by the intelligentsia and the bureaucracy as a result of a temporary situation. The correlation of social and natural features also remained unclear. In this respect, Manuilsky said that it was necessary to look for a just proportion between them and thus make it impossible either to overestimate or underestimate one or another element of the struggle.²

The study of the East entered a new phase with the upsurge of the revolutionary movement in 1925. In March and April that year the Fifth Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI criticised underestimation of the importance of the national question.³ The Sixth Plenum took place under the slogan “Greater attention to the East”, and the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth plenums also focussed their attention on this region, and above all on the revolutionary struggle in China.

The guideline for research in that period was the concept of the national anti-imperialist revolution which closely intertwined with the anti-feudal agrarian revolution. It was placed on the agenda in May 1927, at the Eighth Plenum of the ECCI. At the same time it was noted that this revolution had a tendency to overstep the limits of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, and that it differed from both the West European revolutions and the Russian revolution of 1905 (Seventh Enlarged Plenum, November-December 1926, Resolution of the ECCI on the Present Situation of the Chinese Revolution, July 1927).⁴

This interpretation of the colonial revolution envisaged the need to give priority to the struggle of the proletariat and the peasantry against imperialism and pre-capitalist

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, No. 47, June 4, 1925, p. 619.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, No. 44, July 1927, pp. 983-84.

oppression, and this, naturally, was at odds with the already formulated theory of the "capitalist East" which the Comintern did not adopt in spite of years of pressure by M. N. Roy and his followers.

Its extreme version, which some British and Indian Communists continued to elaborate, no longer referred to India alone. But even in this form the characterisation of a colonial society as a capitalist society, was on the whole rejected once again (Sixth Plenum, 1926).¹

Defending his theory M. N. Roy was compelled to interpret its connection with the world capitalist system in a way that radically differed from his stand both in 1920 and in 1924. He found it possible to say that the policy of imperialism (British) had changed in its essence and was a guarantee of India's industrial growth.² Consequently, he maintained that the thesis of the Second Congress that imperialism was acting as a brake was "less correct".³ Substantiating in this manner the capitalist nature of colonial societies, M. N. Roy reached the conclusion that the world capitalist system almost automatically ensured the growth of capitalism on its periphery. There was logic in his train of thought: since local capitalism did not create its own adequate basis it was necessary, as Roy kept insisting, to search for an external stimulus in order to account for the capitalist nature of society. That was how the notorious theory of "decolonisation", which the Comintern eventually had to deal with, came into being.

In that period the concept of commercial capitalism was also gradually reduced to a mere formula. The Seventh Plenum characterised China's social system as a "variety of economic forms prevailing in the country ... the predominant form, however, being merchant capital, and petty manufacture and home industry in town and country".⁴ In this description it is still possible to discern a desire to keep the old theory alive by placing merchant capital on the same plane with other economic forms. In the final analysis, however,

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. 6, No. 40, May 13, 1926, p. 616.

² *The Fifth World Congress*, p. 612 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 7, No. 44, July 28, 1927, p. 230.

it was rejected judging by the characterisation of the system in China as a combination of "survivals of the semi-feudal character" and "elements of developing capitalism",¹ or even more laconically as a "semi-feudal system of bondage, oppression and exploitation".²

Thus the colonial society was more and more frequently described as a semi-feudal society.

This tendency was reflected in a specific manner in communist scientific works published between 1925 and 1927. In keeping with the views of the preceding period they laid greater emphasis on capitalist "dynamics" than on feudal "statics", and on the development of merchant capital than on the preservation of the feudal nature of landownership. The authors of numerous works regarded the shift of the landowners to market economy, and the acquisition of land by the merchants as an indication of capitalist development,³ and viewed such landowners either as the commercial bourgeoisie,⁴ or as bourgeoisie of the primary accumulation type.⁵

By then the concept of commercial capitalism as applied to the sphere of agrarian relations obviously did not rule out recognition of the feudal nature of the current agrarian system. Therefore many authors pointed out that even the emergence of new forms of landownership in the colonies took place on the basis of the "enslavement" of the peasants. As regards capitalism proper, it remained in this concept only because the emergence of large landed estates associated with the market and the enslavement of the peasantry was often examined by analogy with Eastern Europe and Russia of the 17th and 18th century, as a stage in the disintegration of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. The scientific literature of that period was also inclined to regard the colonial societies at least as "semi-" and "purely feudal" societies.

Since the leading tendency was to recognise the feudal

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 232.

³ V. Gurko-Kryazhin, *A Short History of Persia*, Moscow, 1925, p. 42 (in Russian).

⁴ *Iran dust, Persia Yesterday and Today*, Moscow, 1927, p. 37.

⁵ M. Pavlovich, *India in Struggle...*, p. 62.

nature of the colonial societies and repudiate their capitalist substance, the centre of discussion naturally shifted from the problem of "commercial capital—property in land", to the ascertainment of the specific nature of feudalism and feudal survivals in the agrarian system of these societies.

In a reference to China, for example, the Sixth Plenum of the ECCI which pointed out the existence of semi-feudal elements also mentioned the existence of a "military-feudal regime" there.¹ Accordingly, in analysing the agrarian relations it placed the wealthy landowners on the same plane as administrators, middlemen and other types representative of these pre-capitalist relations.² The Seventh Plenum of the ECCI at the time when agrarian relations were increasingly regarded as semi-feudal, described them as "the native landowning class" and the mainstay of militarism.³ But this formula, which expressed the relations of landownership and political rule typical of European feudalism, was followed by a detailed definition of the agrarian system which assigned the leading role to militarism (as the subject of class conflicts) and relegated the landowners to second place. At the time the gentry, in this case the middle and small landowners of the semi-feudal, semi-capitalist type, were "separated" from the semi-feudal landowners.⁴

Evidently, just as it has surfaced at the Fourth Congress during the elaboration of the agrarian programme, the Comintern at the time (1926-1927) was only beginning to acquire more precise ideas of the nature of pre-capitalist property in land and particularly of its relations with the government machinery.

The new and more profound understanding of colonial societies gained by the theoretical thought of the world

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 6, No. 40, May 13, 1926, p. 649.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Op. cit.*, Vol. 7, No. 11, p. 232.

⁴ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 7, No. 11, p. 231. The documents of the Plenum itself ("Resolution on the Chinese Question") referred to "relics of the military-feudal regime" and not to "landowners". See: "The Paths of the World Revolution"—*Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI. November 22—December 16, 1926, Verbatim Report*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1967, p. 437 (in Russian).

communist movement had its impact on the evaluations of the position of the diverse social forces. It was stressed that the peasantry was a "unit" where there were "various strata" (Sixth Plenum).¹ As can be gathered from the materials of the Seventh and Eighth plenums of the ECCI the Comintern in that period did not regard the peasantry as petty bourgeoisie and underscored instead that it was being increasingly dispossessed of land. It did not identify this process with proletarianisation and was most concerned which the pauperisation of the peasantry.

The Sixth Plenum accused the militarists (and the imperialists) of being mainly responsible for the plight of the Chinese peasantry and looked upon the latter as a united force in the struggle against "the relics of the military-feudal regime" (and the imperialists).²

The Seventh and Eighth plenums drew a clearer distinction between the peasantry and the landowners, although the peasantry was oriented towards struggling against the militarists and the imperialists in the first place. This meant that at the time the Comintern considered it more important to take into account the position of the peasantry in a system of social relations where the main role was played not by the semi-feudal landownership as such, but by the forms in which it was connected with the state (and, we should like to add, which acted as a derivative factor).³

Thus the concept of the capitalist nature of colonial societies was rejected in all its variants, even the halfway ones. On the other hand, there was a powerful tendency to replace it with a concept of the domination of "pure" feudal property in land. It also remained unclear how this property in land was connected with the world capitalist system. This gave rise to an acute contradiction. The slogan of agrarian revolution advanced in that period as an expression of the essence(!), as the pivot of the national liberation anti-

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 6, No. 40, May 13, 1926, p. 649.

² *Ibid.*

³ In general this is typical of any form of property in land (with the exception of capitalist property) inasmuch as it cannot be preserved without non-economic (ideology, state, religion) institutions.

imperialist revolution, required proof of the existence of the object of this revolution (large-scale property in land), for otherwise the revolution was more in the nature of a paupers' mutiny than of a bourgeois-democratic revolt. A scientific approach to the question, however, had to rest on a profound study of the forms of land property both from an historical standpoint and from the standpoint of its place in the world capitalist system.

The logic of events, especially during the Wuhan period of the Chinese revolution, confronted the Comintern with the task of analysing forces which thus far had escaped its close attention. These forces were the urban non-proletarian strata which the Eighth Plenum of the ECCI qualified as petty-bourgeois.¹ Some documents of this Plenum ("Resolution on the Chinese Question") described the urban petty bourgeoisie as a section which had become detached from the mass of artisans and home-workers.² It appears that in this case the Comintern tried to distinguish the upper layer of the petty bourgeoisie.³ Earlier, the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI indicated the groups which formed the entire urban petty bourgeoisie—intellectuals, students, artisans, small traders, etc.⁴ At the time the Comintern did not include the urban semi-proletarian sections into this social formation. This was done by its Sixth Congress.

But the Comintern preserved what was evidently a traditionally stable conception of the petty bourgeoisie as part of the bourgeois class. This was clear from the formula of the Seventh Plenum which separated the "petty urban bourgeoisie" from the peasantry and from a "section of the capitalist bourgeoisie".⁵ Naturally this influenced the Comintern's political estimation of the petty bourgeoisie which in its opinion had "petty-bourgeois" features, but not the features of a "revolutionary democracy" (Eighth Plenum).⁶

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 7, No. 35, June 16, 1927, pp. 737, 739, 741.

² *Ibid.*, p. 739.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 737.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, Vol. 7, No. 11, February 3, 1927, p. 231.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Op. cit.*, Vol. 7, No. 35, June 16, 1927, p. 739.

An important new feature in the analysis of the intelligentsia was recognition of the existence of "democratic military forces" in it. Militarism was also characterised in detail (Seventh Plenum of the ECCI) both as a military organisation and a "socio-political force". As such it was described as "one of the main channels of primary accumulation" based on a system of "semi-feudal government bodies".

The scientific literature of that time contained a new interpretation of the specific role played by the army. V. Gurko-Kryazhin wrote that it was one of the leading participants alongside the bourgeoisie and the landowners, in the events in Persia in 1925.¹ A. Khodorov, while continuing to characterise the militarists within the framework of the concept "military feudals",² noted that as a system militarism had broken away from certain social classes,³ and that the very existence of militarism was a form of the disintegration and decay of the old society.

A study of the position of any class, stratum or group in the colonial society in those years made it necessary again and again to characterise the general level of class differentiation in it. Taking China as an example the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI noted the "weak" class differentiation and said that it was responsible for the "inadequate state of the organisation of the principal socio-political forces".⁴ In its documents the Plenum justly, though evasively, indicated that class differentiation processes took place under the conditions of economic backwardness, primitive technology, low standard of living and numerous vestiges of the past.⁵

The inadequacy of class differentiation was also mentioned in scientific literature. A. Khodorov, for instance, noted a "lack of sharp class distinctions".⁶ Irandust

¹ "The Coup in Persia", *The New East*, 1926, No. 12, p. XLV (in Russian).

² A. Khodorov, M. Pavlovich, *China in the Struggle for Independence*, Moscow, 1925 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁴ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 7, No. 11, *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ A. Khodorov, M. Pavlovich, *China in the Struggle...*, p. 193.

associated the role played by the parties which represented the interests of groups of people and not social sections with the fact that "the class structure of society was not fully differentiated as yet",¹ etc.

The unanimous recognition of the immaturity of class differentiation in the colonial societies meant consolidation of the views adopted in 1924 at the Fifth Congress in opposition to Roy's criticism. But even at this stage the problem of the interconnection between the social struggle and the national, anti-imperialist struggle with the intricate totality of the conditions and interests of the various classes forming a colonial society remained unresolved. For example, the necessary theoretical development was not imparted to the typology of colonial movements as being either "modern" or "with a medieval character", which Lenin proposed in 1920.

Between 1925 and 1927 the Comintern, basing itself on the achievements of the preceding period, gradually evolved a scientific theory of the socio-economic structure of the colonial societies. Displaying even greater determination than ever before it continued to ascertain the specific features of these societies, and this was its major scientific achievement.

This direction, which remained stable in spite of pressure from Eurocentric concept, shows better than anything else that on the whole the Comintern's analysis of the colonial societies followed an ascending line in that period. The reason was that instead of Roy's absolute "globalism", the Comintern adopted Lenin's approach which he had formulated in 1920, as the point of departure for its scientific analysis of individual modes of life, classes and relations in the colonial society. But at this, chiefly analytical level of study, it was as yet impossible to give a complete picture of this society and define its exact place in the world system. That also accounts for the fact that while rejecting M. N. Roy's schemes the Comintern was unable at the time to counterpose them with its own all-round scientific concept of the colonial world.

This could be done only at the next, synthesising stage of studies. Methodologically, the transition began at the end of the 1920s in connection with discussions on Lenin's theo-

¹ Irandust, *Persia Yesterday and Today*, p. 32 (in Russian).

ry of imperialism and the problems of the "Asian mode of production". But the inadequacy of concrete scientific studies, particularly historical, coupled with the increased desire to avoid theoretical generalisations seriously impeded such a radical shift in scientific thought.

The research conducted by the Comintern between 1920 and 1927 was significant not only for that period. The study of the specific features of colonial societies as elements of the world capitalist system, the historically determined aspects of their agrarian relations and the new role played by the so-called intermediate sections and groups is also important at the current stage of the study of the developing countries.

BOURGEOIS AND REFORMIST HISTORIANS ON THE COMINTERN'S POLICY IN THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTIONS

G. Z. SORKIN

Bourgeois and reformist historians are trying hard to belittle and misrepresent the Comintern's activity which it conducted for the sake of the liberation of the oppressed peoples. And although some of these historians consider themselves champions of progress, the objective purpose of their works is to justify imperialist oppression and economic and social inequality.

In this article it is neither possible nor necessary to dwell on all the works by bourgeois and reformist historians treating of the Comintern's theory and practice in the national liberation movement. We shall endeavour to select the main and most typical features of their approach to this problem by examining some of the most serious works.¹

The British bourgeois historian Hugh Seton-Watson gives the following explanation for the great attention which Communists began to attach to the problems of the national liberation movement in the East: "The defeats of 1919 in Germany and Hungary, and the subsequent decline of revolutionary ardour throughout Europe, caused the Bolsheviks to show greater interest in Asia. The proletariat of the West must be reinforced by the toiling masses of the East. The capitalist Powers of the West must be struck at vulnerable point in their colonial empires.... What attitude was the Comintern to take? Should it support the forces of

¹ The author has to confine himself to examining only those works which deal with the general problems of this subject. The large number of works in foreign countries criticising the stand of the Communists and Communist parties of individual countries towards the national liberation movement have to be treated separately.

social revolution, feeble as they were, at the cost of splitting the nationalist ranks, or should it support the existing nationalist leaders even if they were socially reactionary, in order to cause trouble to the Western Powers, the main forces of world capitalism?" A pure Communist internationalist, in Seton-Watson's opinion, would prefer the first policy. But Soviet diplomacy imposed the second. And as the control of the Soviet Government over the Comintern grew, the author contends, the second policy predominated. Nevertheless, neither the Comintern nor the Soviet Government ever completely committed itself either way. "The result was that they lost the confidence of many revolutionaries, without gaining the confidence of many nationalists."¹

Seton-Watson's main thesis, which is to be found in almost all the works of bourgeois and reformist historians, is that the Communists occupy a pragmatic position to the detriment of a principled one on the national and colonial questions. They are interested in the struggle of the oppressed peoples for independence and progress only so long as it creates difficulties for the imperialists forcing them to assign considerable forces to suppress the colonial movements, and weaken their offensive against the working class in their countries and against the Soviet Union. He claims that the Communists look upon the oppressed peoples as the objects of their influence and that accounts for their "opportunistic" policy in the national and colonial questions: sometimes they support the forces of social revolution in the colonies and semi-colonial countries, at other times, on the contrary, they support the nationalist leaders even if they are reactionary. Everything depends on the situation and the political advantages to be derived.

Seton-Watson's views are by no means original. Quite often he ascribes to the Communists the very same opportunistic pragmatism, which is typical of the imperialist politicians, in relations with the colonies and dependent countries. In a preface to his book he wrote that beginning with 1914 Lenin "carefully studied and systematically exploited national and colonial tensions". He asserts that communist

¹ Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Pattern of Communist Revolution, A Historical Analysis*, London, 1960, pp. 127-28.

statements in the Asian countries that the Soviet Union had solved national and colonial problems which it had inherited from tsarist Russia do not correspond to the truth. "This contrast between reality and propaganda in the national and colonial problems is an important part of the history of the communist movement."¹

Such assertions are neither convincing nor well-considered. Anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda has been repeating such fabrications for decades. It could have been imagined that making such a statement in 1960 in an historical work, he would have at least tried to back it up with facts. But he does not, nor can he refer to any data about the situation in the national republics of the Soviet Union confirming his conclusion.

Many diehard antagonists of the Soviet Union who differ from Seton-Watson in only one thing — basic honesty — cannot dispute the enormous gains of the socialist republics of the Soviet East which have turned from backward and oppressed into economically, socially and culturally advanced regions occupying a truly equal place in the great community of Soviet peoples. There are convincing figures showing the gains of the Soviet Central Asian republics. They are known to public opinion in countries of Asia and other continents from books and from accounts by people from these countries who visited the Soviet republics. Figures showing the impressive results of cultural development in the Soviet Central Asian republics which prior to the October Socialist Revolution stood at a low level of economic and cultural growth need no commentaries.²

"The October Revolution and the building of socialism awakened and roused to independent activity formerly backward peoples, some of which were thus saved from physical

¹ Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Patterns of Communist Revolution...*, p. IX.

² We shall mention only a few of the numerous works on the success of socialist construction in the Soviet Central Asian republics: *History of the Kazakh SSR*, Alma Ata, 1967; *History of the Kirghiz SSR*, Vol. 2, Book 2, Frunze, 1968; *History of the Uzbek SSR*, Vol. 4, Tashkent, 1968; *History of the Tajik People*, Vol. 3, Book 2, Moscow, 1965; *History of the Turkmen SSR*, Vol. 2, Ashkhabad, 1957; *The Land of Soviets. Fifty Years. Statistics*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 295-337 (all in Russian).

extinction. During the building of socialism they acquired their own statehood, put an end to their economic and cultural backwardness and gradually adopted the highest socialist forms of economy and culture. This achievement was all the more remarkable in view of the fact that many nations which, when the Revolution was accomplished, had been at the stage of feudalism or even the patriarchal-clan system, bypassed capitalism in their progress towards socialism."¹

In 1944 Jawaharlal Nehru wrote that to the names of four legendary warriors of Central Asia a fifth must now be added, "another type of person, not a warrior but a conqueror in a different realm, round whose name legend has already gathered — Lenin".² A very just observation. Lenin and his teaching won the hearts of the peoples of Soviet Central Asia, and now this teaching is gradually capturing the minds of all peoples fighting for complete liberation from imperialist and capitalist oppression.

Seton-Watson, however, writes that the Comintern had departed from purely communist views on the national and colonial questions, and gradually slid down to the positions of bourgeois nationalism.

This is also the stand of Franz Borkenau, a renegade of communism of long standing.³ Borkenau reasons along the following lines: Lenin was deeply impressed by the Persian revolution of 1908 and the first Chinese revolution of 1911. The socialist parties of the West, for their part, paid scant

¹ *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Theses of the CC CPSU*, Moscow, 1970, p. 15.

² Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, New York, 1946, p. 227.

³ Franz Borkenau is the author of several books on the history of the Comintern. From 1921 to 1929 he was a member of the Communist Party of Germany, but then became one of the most vicious "unmaskers" of communism. He openly stated that his studies were intended to arm those working in the police, army and other punitive institutions of the bourgeois state and fighting against communism. He wrote with cynicism that there could be no objective study of the history of the Comintern. The communist minority, he said, cannot be persuaded, it has to be exterminated. We refer to his unsubstantiated statements simply because almost all bourgeois and reformist historians of the Comintern turn to him as a No. 1 authority on the history of the communist movement and view his assertions as an objective source.

attention to these movements, which, as they contended (and Borkenau says "rightly contended"), had little in common with the struggle of the European workers. Lenin qualified such views as an expression of opportunism. "Though the defence of nationalism was hardly compatible with socialist internationalism," Borkenau continues, "Lenin, pushing aside all objections of principle, had from the earliest days of his career insisted upon the right of every nation to acquire complete political independence if it so desired.... Great realist as he was, he had very soon acknowledged the supreme importance of nationalism in our time.... The Soviets and the Comintern did not hesitate to make use of these movements for their own purposes."¹

Such are Borkenau's arguments on this issue and they are close to those of Seton-Watson and the majority of the other bourgeois historians of the Comintern. Many, if not all of them, obviously do not understand or do not know the theory of socialist revolution according to which and fully in conformity with realities of life the national liberation movement is viewed as one of the most important elements of the integral world revolutionary processes. They deliberately split this process into its components — the proletarian, the national liberation and the democratic movements. They make believe that these movements develop and advance each in its own way, and that they contradict and even struggle against each other. This unscientific approach based on faulty methodology is consistent with imperialism's goal to disunite the forces of the revolutionary movement, put them at logger-heads and thus retain its domination.

The concept according to which the Comintern regarded the national liberation struggle exclusively as a means of furthering the aims of the proletarian movement and the interests of the Soviet Union is repeated in the works of the bourgeois historian Günther Nollau. Giving an account of the debates on the national and colonial questions at the Second Congress of the Comintern, he asserts that Lenin had "tactical reasons" in mind when he proposed that the "Communists should support the 'bourgeois-demo-

¹ Franz Borkenau, *World Communism. A History of the Communist International*, New York, 1962, pp. 284-90.

cratic liberation movements' in the colonial and semi-colonial territories"¹.

This is also the opinion of Jane Degras. In the commentaries to excerpts from the Comintern's documents on the national and colonial questions which she included in her book, she wrote: "At the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, held immediately after the foundation of the Third International, Bukharin said: 'If we propound the solution of the right of self-determination for the colonies ... we lose nothing by it. On the contrary, we gain.... The most outright nationalist movement... is only water for our mill, since it contributes to the destruction of English imperialism.'"² Jane Degras is out to prove that the Communists looked upon the colonial and national questions as a means of attaining their objectives, and approached them with only one yardstick: "are they water for their mill or not?". She distorts the essence of the matter. From the point of view of "facts" everything seems to be correct in this quotation: Bukharin did speak at the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B) and the excerpt from his speech is relayed more or less correctly. But Jane Degras omitted one "tiny detail", namely, that Bukharin's statement contradicted the policy of the RCP(B) and was resolutely rejected by Lenin with the backing of the Eighth Congress of the Party.

Among the works of bourgeois historians dealing with the national and colonial questions, a history of Soviet Russia by the British scholar E. H. Carr merits special attention. Carr correctly notes that back in 1908, in an article entitled "Inflammable Material in World Politics", and particularly in an article "Democracy and Narodism in China" written in 1912 Lenin advanced a significant proposition that "the democratic revolutionary movement for the national liberation of the backward countries of Asia should be linked

¹ Günther Nollau, *International Communism and World Revolution. History and Methods*, London, 1961, p. 59.

² *The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents. Selected and Edited by Jane Degras*, Vol. I, 1919-1922, London-New York-Toronto, 1956, p. 138. Earlier the British historian E. H. Carr wrote the same in his *A History of Soviet Russia. The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, Vol. 3, London, 1953, pp. 235-36.

in potential alliance with the socialist revolutionary movement of the industrial countries of Europe".¹ Carr comprehends the main line of the Second Congress of the Comintern on this issue. He writes: "The task before the congress was to apply the principles of world revolution to the eastern peoples, to develop the doctrine of a common struggle in which all the workers of the world, west and east, had their part to play...."²

Carr justly notes that the proclamation and implementation by the Soviet Communists of the right of nations to self-determination convincingly demonstrated the sincerity of the Soviet Government's declaration that it was prepared to defend this right for other peoples which were in dependence on the imperialist states.³

At the same time Carr entertains the biased view that the "Eastern" policy of the Comintern and the USSR was allegedly designed to create difficulties for the Western imperialist states, Britain in the first place, to get them to pull their forces away from the Soviet Union, and to exploit the national and colonial movements in the interests of Soviet foreign policy. He says that in view of the extreme weakness of the young Soviet Republic in the first years of its existence, "it cost little to renounce the rights of the former Tsarist government".⁴

He maintains that the fundamental decisions of the Soviet Government and the Comintern, namely, recognition of the right of nations to secession, and repudiation and condemnation of unequal treaties, were a forced measure taken in view of the difficult situation. He illustrates this thesis as follows: "In the summer of 1920 Soviet policy still halted before the fateful choice between universal support of communist parties in foreign countries for the furtherance of world-wide revolution and co-operation with selected bourgeois governments, where national interests appeared to require it, even at the expense of the communist parties in the countries concerned. Optimism about the prospects of

¹ Edward Hallet Carr. *A History of Soviet Russia. The Bolshevik 1917-1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 229-30.

² *Ibid.*, p. 251.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

world revolution, which had seemed in partial eclipse during the winter of 1919-1920, was once more general; and powerful circles in the Kremlin still shrank from military or diplomatic alliance with non-communist powers" and "called in the East to redress the unfavourable balance of the West".¹ Further on he wrote that the decision of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern concerning a united anti-imperialist front "imparted the maximum of flexibility to the Comintern line, and made it readily adjustable to the changing needs of Soviet policy. It marked one further step in the identification of the ultimate interest of world revolution with the immediate national interest of the country...."²

Authors who make such assertions are guided by the false premise of the contradiction between the interests of the world's first proletarian state and the world revolutionary movement, whose headquarters at the time was the Comintern. In actual fact, the strengthening of the positions of the Soviet Republic, including in the sphere of foreign policy, directly stimulated the development of the world revolutionary process. On the other hand the revolutionary struggle in the West and East was a tremendous support for the Soviet people in their building of socialism. Thus the unity of the anti-imperialist policy of the Comintern and the USSR, so irritating to the bourgeois historians, was a natural phenomenon and sprang from the objective community of interests of the victorious proletariat and the oppressed masses of the whole world.

Carr maintains that the decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern in the national and colonial questions, like most of its other decisions, were taken in an unquestioning faith in the imminence of a proletarian revolution which would sweep the world. Once this faith was disappointed, he goes on to say, the decisions themselves, applied in conditions utterly different from those for which they had been designed, not only falsified the intentions of their authors, but were used to justify a series of compromises and retreats. He believes that what was difficult about the policy of co-operation with bourgeois-democratic national movements was not that it exposed the Bolshevik leaders

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 250, 270.

² *Ibid.*, p. 484.

to charges of opportunism from leftist doctrinaires, but that the potential ally (the national bourgeoisie) was as well aware as the Communists that such alliances were short-lived.¹

Carr seeks to prove impossibility of an alliance between the proletariat and the national liberation movements after the latter results in the attainment of independence. When this happens the alliance is bound to fall apart, for the Communists will promptly set the task of accomplishing proletarian revolution. Carr ascribes the Communists a theory of a Trotskyite nature that has nothing in common with the Comintern's conclusion on this issue. In its resolution on the Eastern question the Fourth Congress, in which Lenin took part, analysed the economic and political aspects of the national liberation movement and arrived at the conclusion that "in the colonial East it is at present necessary to put forward the watchword of a United Anti-Imperialist Front. The expediency of these tactics is dictated by the prospects of a prolonged struggle against world imperialism demanding the mobilisation of all revolutionary elements".² In formulating this conclusion the Congress proceeded from the view that even after they won political independence the peoples of the colonial countries would face the difficult job of overcoming economic and political backwardness which would require prolonged and concerted efforts of all the progressive forces of a given country. "Under capitalism," the document stated, "the backward countries cannot achieve modern technique and culture without paying enormous tribute in the form of barbarous exploitation and oppression for the advantage of the capitalists of the Great Powers."³ Only the victorious proletariat of the advanced countries can help the peoples of the East which have won independence to build up their productive forces without any strings attached. The experience of the struggle of the past decades, and especially the experience of the 1960s, a period of an intensive disintegration of the colonial system of imperialism, confirms Lenin's theory of

¹ E. H. Carr, *A History of Soviet Russia...*, pp. 258-59.

² *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress...*, p. 59.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

the national liberation movement. This theory became the basis for the Comintern's decisions on the matter in question, and was designed not only to cover the period of the winning of national sovereignty, but also the stage of its consolidation and attainment of economic independence.

Lenin and the Comintern never implied that the victory of the world revolution would take place all at once. It was a question of a long and difficult epoch of change from the capitalist to the socialist mode of production with periods of upsurge and decline, temporary setbacks and even defeats in some sectors. But the main direction of the movement leads to victory over imperialism. Therein lies the objective foundation for a lasting alliance of the proletariat and national liberation revolutions, and their interconnection and interaction as essential prerequisites of victory in which all members of the alliance are interested. Carr's myopia that makes him believe that only capitalist development ensured progress prevents him from seeing mankind's advance towards socialism.

In order to prove the inevitable failure of the alliance of the working class and the national bourgeoisie Carr not only gives a false account of communist policy following the achievement of independence but also alleges that there is an objective reason for the break between the recent allies. He contends that the bourgeoisie must play the main role in a democratic revolution. A victory in this revolution is bound to stimulate capitalist development and that inevitably runs against the interests of the working class. Its allies of today, he writes, the peasants and the national bourgeoisie, are its enemies tomorrow, after the achievement of independence.¹

Lenin's theory of the national and colonial questions rests on other premises. Any national movement in the capitalist world is a bourgeois-democratic movement. But Lenin noted the basic difference between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and of an oppressed nation and the distinction between the imperialist bourgeoisie of the West which "fearing the growth and increasing strength of the proletariat, comes out in support of everything backward, moribund and medieval", and the bourgeoisie in the dependent countries where

¹ E. H. Carr, *A History of Soviet Russia...*, p. 258.

it "is as yet siding with the people against reaction".¹ The peasantry made up the bulk of the population in the dependent countries. The activity of the working masses in the rural areas and towns can have a serious and, under certain circumstances, a decisive impact on the scope and the outcome of the national liberation movement. Political independence can be won under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie. But this is merely the first step towards full independence and the liquidation of economic and cultural backwardness. The further struggle for full independence from imperialism and for the development of a national economy calls for radical social changes and the efforts of all democratic, anti-imperialist and progressive forces of the country coupled with the growing political activity of the workers, peasants, the intelligentsia and the patriotic section of the national middle and petty bourgeoisie capable of fighting side by side with the workers against the common enemy. The successful outcome of this struggle depends on an alliance with the socialist countries which offer every support to the young national states, and on an alliance with the international working-class movement.

The experience of recent years shows that this is the only way to loosen and then cast off the economic yoke of imperialist monopolies and gradually overcome the age-old backwardness inherited from colonialism. Both Lenin's teaching on the national and colonial questions and the lessons of history disprove the thesis about the imminent split in the anti-imperialist front on the first day of political independence. The revolutionary progress towards socialism confronts the working masses with the task of securing the unity of all revolutionary forces in the struggle against imperialism which is striving to put off its hour of doom. During the periods of aggravation of this struggle individual groups of the national bourgeoisie betray the cause, but that is not the determinative of the struggle as a whole. It continues, involving millions of workers, peasants and small urban producers. The wealthy bourgeoisie which increasingly loses its monopoly on power is turning away from it, and social sections connected with foreign capital reject it.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Backward Europe and Advanced Asia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, pp. 99, 100.

All this strengthens the unity of the truly anti-imperialist forces.

Bourgeois criticism of the Comintern's theory of the national liberation struggle and its practical activity in this sphere show that capitalist ideologists are afraid of the formidable alliance of the international proletariat and the national liberation movements. By asserting that the Comintern intended to use the national liberation movement only in the interests of the proletariat in the industrialised countries to the detriment of the interests of the oppressed peoples, bourgeois historians hope to divert attention from the colonialist policy of violence, plunder and genocide.

The same calumny about the Communists was spread by the reformists. But their arguments were somewhat different. They claimed that revolutionary movements for national sovereignty in the colonial and semi-colonial countries could jeopardise the future of mankind. The colonies, they said, performed the functions of a "big village" with respect to the capitalist town. Liberation of the colonies would violate the naturally-formed social division of labour. The premature withdrawal of the imperialist states from the colonies would be detrimental to the colonial peoples, too. It would aggravate the political and economic situation in these countries and could plunge them into primitive barbarity and chaos. This was a spurious stand. By falsely accusing the Comintern of egoism in its attitude to the oppressed peoples, and by putting forward the far-fetched concept about the need to preserve the "big village" for the sake of the interests of the capitalist town, i.e., the colonialists, the right-wing Social-Democrats in effect called upon the colonial peoples to be submissive and patient. Their implication was that the colonialists would take care of the future of the oppressed peoples, and the socialists would pressure the imperialist governments, secure a more humane treatment of the colonies and gradually prepare them for the shift to independence.

The criticism levelled at the Comintern's stand on the national and colonial questions by the Labour and Socialist International (LSI) was based on a profound disregard for the essence of the new economic and political processes of the imperialist epoch and the alignment of revolutionary

forces they occasioned. This gave rise to the concept that any revolutionary action of the masses against imperialist oppression leads to chaos if it is undertaken before the bourgeois-democratic development in the colonies is completed. The colonial question was on the agenda of the LSI Third Congress (June 1928). On the whole its decisions differed but little from the resolutions adopted by the League of Nations. The colonial peoples were viewed as an object and their sovereignty and active participation in the struggle for independence were considered premature. The economic substance of such a policy was as follows: until developed capitalism embraced all countries the capitalist mode of production would continue to fulfil progressive functions and its weakening was impermissible and reactionary. This tactical line was determined by fear of revolutionary actions. The leader of Fabian socialism G.D.H. Cole wrote in this connection: "Their evolutionary Socialist philosophy led them to think in terms, not of revolution or colonial uprisings, but at most of gradual advances towards limited forms of self-government that could be fitted into the framework of colonial rule or made compatible, in politically independent countries, with peaceful co-operation with foreign investors kept in some sort of order by their own Governments. Disliking revolution at home, they tended to disapprove of it in colonial or semi-colonial areas; and even when they were theoretically against racial inequality and discrimination — as not quite all of them were — they thought rather of the gradual fading away of these evils than of their forcible removal.... They were not at all prepared, as the Communists were, to seize on almost any opportunity of creating trouble for the great capitalist powers by taking the side of almost any nationalist movement that was resisting their domination."¹

The Third Congress of the Labour and Socialist International adopted a hostile attitude towards the Anti-Imperialist League and recommended the socialists to withdraw from it alleging it was a communist manoeuvre.² This alarm-

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought. Communism and Social-Democracy 1914-1931*, Part II, London, 1958, pp. 877-78.

² See: *Dritter Kongress der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Internationale. Brüssel 5, bis 11. August 1928*, Zürich, 1928, Bd. II, S. VI. 108.

ed even the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois *Frankfurter Zeitung*, apprehensive that such a stand would augment Communist influence in the national liberation movement wrote: "The error of progressive elements in Europe and particularly of the Second International was that they failed to concern themselves with this movement in good time and did not join, even if belatedly, the activity of an already created organisation."¹

The Labour and Socialist International explained that it adopted this attitude towards the Anti-Imperialist League because it could not work in this organisation together with the Communists, who, it purported, sought to use the League in their own interests regarding the interests of the oppressed peoples as an issue of secondary importance.²

It was typical of Social-Democracy that it failed to grasp the difference between the nationalism of the oppressor nation and the oppressed nation, which Lenin had spoken about. The socialists declared that the Comintern's support for the national liberation movement was a departure from proletarian internationalism. They contended that so long as the oppressed peoples remained under a foreign yoke, nationalism would continue to reign and inhibit the normal development of their countries. It would be possible to spread socialist ideas only when the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries would become independent as a result of capitalist development, and until that happened there was nothing that the socialists could do in the colonies.³

One can agree with Cole who wrote: "Largely out of hostility to the Communists, they [the Socialists — *Ed.*] narrowed Socialism down so as to make it essentially a West European rather than a world-wide creed, and failed to offer any message to the masses in the colonial and under-developed countries, or indeed to anyone who was not in a position to tread securely along the parliamentary road."⁴

¹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 18, 1927, No. 129.

² *Dritter Kongress...*, Op. cit., S. VI. 108.

³ *Ibid.*, S. VI. 109; G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought. Communism and Social Democracy 1914-1931*, Part II, p. 878.

⁴ G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought...*, p. 884.

A somewhat different course from the one pursued by the leadership of the Labour and Socialist International in the colonial issue was followed by the Austro-Marxist theoretician Otto Bauer. In his speech at the Third Congress of the LSI in 1928 he acknowledged that "one of the biggest and perhaps the biggest world historic service of the Soviet regime is that by its existence and its policy towards the peoples of the East it accelerated the process of national revolutions in the East".¹ Naturally it is impossible to agree with the formula "perhaps the biggest service", for Bauer and in fact many other socialists used it to underscore that Lenin's teaching could be applied only in Russia and Eastern countries and not in the West. Although Bauer did not vote against the resolution of the Third Congress of the LSI on the colonial question, his opinion differed from the official stand of the organisation's leadership.

Bauer also disputed Lenin's premise endorsed at the Second and Sixth congresses of the Comintern that under certain favourable conditions the capitalist stage was not inevitable for the backward countries. The Programme of the Comintern adopted at its Sixth Congress said in part: "In view of the existence of centres of Socialism represented by Soviet Republics of growing economic power, the colonies which break away from imperialism economically gravitate towards and gradually combine with the industrial centres of world Socialism, are drawn into the channel of Socialist construction, and by skipping the further stage of development of capitalism, as the predominant system, obtain opportunities for rapid economic and cultural progress."² This was a revolutionary conclusion that opened for the oppressed people a real prospect of emerging from their economic and social plight. It was a scientific conclusion based on the theoretical legacy of Marx and Engels, and on Lenin's analysis of new social phenomena and his teaching about imperialism and the possibility of non-capitalist development. But it did not, of course, fit into Bauer's trend of thought.

"Anyone who is familiar with the history of the Revolu-

¹ *Dritter Kongress...*, S. VI. 153.

² *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 92, December 31, 1928, p. 1762.

tion in Russia," he said in the above speech, "knows about the Marxists' struggle against the Narodniks. He will remember the illusions of the initial period of Russian socialism, the notions that the laws governing the development of Europe were inapplicable for Russia, and that Russia on the basis of the village commune would in one leap find herself in a socialist society.... Today these illusions have reappeared in the East. We have come to a point when Russian Bolshevism which arose out of Russian Marxism nourishes the illusions that it is possible for the East to cover the path from pre-capitalist semi-feudal society to socialism in a single leap."¹ Thus Bauer simply rejects, without resorting to scientific analysis and without examining the arguments presented by the Communists, Lenin's conclusion, which now has been confirmed by the experience of socialist construction in the Eastern republics of the Soviet Union, the experience of the Mongolian People's Republic and the historical tendency characteristic of the development of the national liberation movement since 1917.

M. N. Roy's works occupied a place of their own in the historiography of the Comintern. There was a time when Roy was a member of the ECCI where he represented the communist movement of India, but in 1929 he parted company with the Comintern. In his *The Communist International* written in 1943, he sharply criticised the entire political course of the Comintern, including its policy in the national and colonial questions. "The resolutions of the Communist International regarding India [a reference to the Theses of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern on the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonial countries — G. S.] since 1928 were the height of stupidity," he wrote. "Very inadequately informed about the conditions in the colonial countries, Lenin had attributed an important revolutionary role to the nationalist movements in those countries. He regarded the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries as a revolutionary class. Other founder-members of the International had questioned his views. Nevertheless, there was general agreement on the policy that the movement for the liberation of the colonial countries was to be supported,

¹ *Dritter Kongress...*, S.S. VI. 153-VI. 154.

particularly by the working class of the respective imperialist countries.

"Lenin expressed his views in 1920. During the following years, the situation in the colonial countries, particularly in India, changed greatly. By 1928, there could not be any illusion about the revolutionary role of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The fact of their seeking a compromise with Imperialism could not be disputed.... The cause was gradual disappearance of the monopoly of imperialist finance and the consequent 'decolonisation' of India. The benefit of the process all went to Indian capitalism. The Communist International refused to accept this perfectly Marxist view of the changed situation. The Sixth world Congress in 1928 condemned the expounders of the theory of decolonisation as apologists of Imperialism."¹

Contradictory as they are the decisions of the Sixth Congress on the national and colonial questions are of very considerable theoretical importance. The Congress deserves praise for exposing the bourgeois theory of decolonisation which was upheld by the reformist leaders of the Social-Democratic parties in the hope of using it to convince the masses of imperialism's "civilising" mission in the colonies and to prove the identity of interests of imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. It was pointed out in the decisions of the Congress and in the speeches of its delegates that economic laws compelled imperialism to build up industry, transport and trade in the colonies. But, in spite of assertions by the proponents of the theory of decolonisation, this development of industry did not promote the industrialisation of the colonial countries. Industrialisation, especially the production of the means of production, is industrial development on a national basis, and that clashed with the interests of imperialism. The difficulties that confronted the countries which had shaken off capitalist oppression after the Second World War, illustrate the correctness of the stand the Sixth Congress adopted towards the theory of decolonisation.

Thus, in his criticism of the decisions of the Sixth Congress on the national and colonial question, Roy branded as

¹ M. N. Roy, *The Communist International*, Bombay, 1943, p. 48.

erroneous precisely those conclusions for which the Congress deserves serious praise.

In the above work Roy expounded his eclectic views on the national and colonial questions. In effect they are a futile attempt to combine the reformist theory of Social-Democracy with Trotskyism, anarchism and narodism. He repeatedly enlarged on these views in his articles and speeches.¹ Especially characteristic in this respect was his speech at the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions of the Second Congress of the Comintern and his polemic with Lenin.² The Second Congress adopted Lenin's theses as the basis for its main resolution on the national and colonial questions and it was these theses that for many years determined the general line of the Communist parties in the national liberation movements in the East. The Congress also adopted Roy's *Supplementary Theses*, but not before they were fundamentally edited by Lenin who eliminated the more serious erroneous propositions.³ Nevertheless, even after that *The Supplementary Theses*, as E. Varga correctly notes, they differed from Lenin's theses by their more radical character.⁴ In spite of the decisions of the Second Congress Roy did not give up his mistaken leftist positions.

Roy's last book, *Memoirs*, was published posthumously.⁵ In it he devoted considerable space to the national and colonial questions, particularly to their examination at the Second Congress of the Comintern. Though it is not without historical inaccuracies and bias in the presentation of facts it is an interesting work, particularly the part in which the author recalls his meetings and discussions with Lenin. The

¹ See: M. N. Roy, "The Revolutionary Movement in India" in *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 12, pp. 2165-72; "Manifesto of the Revolutionary Party of India" in the *Life of Nationalities*, July 25, 1920; "Report on the Proceedings in the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions at the Comintern Second Congress" in the *Bulletin of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, No. 1, July 27, 1920 (all in Russian).

² For details see A. B. Reznikov's article in this book.

³ See: A. B. Reznikov, "V. I. Lenin on the National Liberation Movement", *Kommunist*, 1967, No. 7, pp. 91-102 (in Russian).

⁴ E. Varga, *Essays on the Problems of the Political Economy of Capitalism*, Moscow, 1964, p. 91 (in Russian).

⁵ M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964.

book shows how Roy's views developed from nationalism through vulgar Marxism to the philosophy of the so-called new Renaissance, 20th century humanism.¹ In his *Memoirs* Roy acknowledges that at the Second Congress he disagreed with Lenin's theory on the national and colonial question. He writes that in his debates with Lenin prior to the Congress he upheld the standpoint that the national bourgeoisie in the more developed colonial countries such as India was not distinguished as a class in the feudal social order. Therefore in his opinion the national movement was reactionary and its victory would not signify a triumph of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. "The role of Gandhi was the crucial point of difference," Roy writes. "Lenin believed that, as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, he was a revolutionary. I maintained that, a religious and cultural revivalist, he was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically."²

Roy's concept of the national liberation revolution is a revision of the Comintern's basic premises and of the substance of Lenin's teaching about the unity of the world revolutionary process which was formulated in the slogan: "Workers of all countries, and all oppressed peoples, unite!"

Some historians of the Communist International either fail to mention the policy of the Comintern in the national and colonial questions, or confine themselves to brief, unsubstantiated conclusions. One of them is Julius Braunthal. In the first two volumes of his work on the history of the Internationals he devotes approximately one page to the national question and claims that Lenin studied national revolutionary movements in the colonies only because they were potential allies of Soviet Russia. The break away of the colonies from the colonial powers would "lead to the collapse of the latter's capitalist structure". Therefore Lenin believed that one of the most urgent tasks that faced the Comintern was to establish a close alliance with the national liberation movement, and he said as much at the Second Congress of the Comintern. "In India, Turkey, Iran and

¹ This evolution is examined in greater detail in G. D. Parikh's preface to the book and in the epilogue written by V. B. Karnik.

² M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, p. 379.

Java Moscow's efforts to influence the national revolutionary movement were defeated," he wrote. "In China, on the contrary, the influence of the Soviet Union on the development of the revolution proved to be the decisive factor." Braunthal adds a footnote: "A concise and splendid exposition of the colonial policy of Russia and the Communist International is given in Borkenau's *A History of the Communist International* pp. 284-95."¹

The tactical approach of Braunthal, former Secretary of the Labour and Socialist International, consists in that he begins with an "objective" account of Lenin's stand on the colonial question and reduces it to thesis of "Moscow's interest", a thesis which is supported by all anti-communists. Then he attempts to attribute to Lenin Roy's thesis about the primacy of the national liberation revolution, and finally, though not in the text but in the footnote, shares the views of the renegade Borkenau, pseudo-authority No. 1 on the history of the Comintern.

Professor Carl Landauer of California University, a socialist-reformist, in his major work *European Socialism*, devotes several pages to the history of the Comintern's policy in the national and colonial questions. His approach is more serious than that of other anti-communist historians. But he, too, does not accept the basic principle of internationalism and socialism concisely formulated in the motto: "No nation can be free which oppresses other nations." Hence his assertion that the formation of an alliance between the proletarian and the national liberation movements advocated by the Communists is necessary only in order to strike a blow at the "most vulnerable flank" of their enemy, capitalism.²

Landauer likewise proceeds from this theory of "interests" when he insists that the First Congress of the Comintern paid little attention to the national and colonial questions because a serious threat was hanging over Soviet Russia

¹ Julius Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, Bd. 2, Hannover, 1963, S. 342.

² Carl Landauer, *European Socialism. A History of Ideas and Movements from the Industrial Revolution to Hitler's Seizure of Power*, Vol. I, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959, p. 805.

at the time. In these circumstances, he maintains, "the stirring up of revolutions in European countries seemed far more important than agitation among colonials". But in 1920, at the Second Congress, when the Soviets had greater freedom of action, they launched a forceful attack on the imperialist system. Still, he goes on to say, this attack was fraught with an irreconcilable contradiction between internationalism, the basic principle of Marxist philosophy, and the nationalism of the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. One of the main aspects of this contradiction, according to Landauer, was the dilemma which confronted the Comintern: whether to unite with the small communist groups in the dependent countries or to co-operate with the native "middle classes", the peasantry and the intelligentsia and thus repudiate the class struggle. "Although the congress decreed that all Communist parties must support the 'revolutionary freedom movements' in the 'countries of backward, prevailingly feudal, patriarchal or peasant-patriarchal character', and, especially, must give the peasant movements against the landlords all possible assistance, the purpose of such help was defined as follows: It is the duty of the Communist International to support the revolutionary movement in the colonies and backward countries, but merely for the purpose of rallying the elements of the future proletarian parties — of the truly and not merely nominally Communist Parties — in all the backward countries and to educate them to the consciousness of their special tasks, particularly the task of combating the bourgeois-democratic tendencies in their own nation."¹ And Landauer draws the following conclusion: "Taken together with the general tactical procedures and traditions of the Communist parties, these instructions meant that the Communists should cooperate with the revolutionary peasant and middle-class democracy of the colonial and semicolonial countries, but, at the same time, pursue a 'boring from within' policy against their allies by conspiratorial means. To believers in dialectic philosophy, such policies might appear as historical necessity, but the non-Communists of the co-

¹ Landauer quotes this passage from Article 5 of the 11th thesis of Lenin's "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions."

lonial and semicolonial nations could not be blamed for regarding these Communist tactics the worst kind of betrayal."¹

This line of reasoning was typical of the bourgeois method of examining the problems of the national liberation struggle within the framework of formal logic without attempting to find in reality itself, in the dialectics of the revolutionary struggle, the outcome of the contradiction between internationalism and nationalism. A national liberation struggle takes place in complex and contradictory conditions, and it is up to the scholar not merely to uncover these contradictions, but even more so, to be able to see how they are surmounted in real life, in the political struggle of the operating forces. Landauer, like other bourgeois historians of the Comintern, is out to prove the insurmountable nature of these contradictions and persuade the reader that capitalist relations are eternal and that they have only to be somewhat improved.

Neither is it possible to take his statement about the Communists "‘boring from within’ by conspiratorial means" seriously. The Communists have never and nowhere declared that they defend the capitalist way of development. They openly say that their goal is to replace the capitalist mode of production with a socialist one by revolutionary means. The substance of Lenin's teaching on the national and colonial questions which has the full backing of the Communists is that "the bourgeois nationalism of *any* oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression."² That is the idea that the Communists never and nowhere undertook to protect the national bourgeois system against the historically determined advent of socialism. On the contrary, by the entire activity they have expedited its advent, making no secret of it. Is it possible then to reproach the Communists for after having entered into an alliance with revolutionary bourgeois-democratic nationalism they do not attach themselves for ever to it?

Jacques Freymond, a Swiss historian, used other methods

¹ Carl Landauer, *Op. cit.*, p. 806.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 412.

to distort the Comintern's policy. He was the editor of a collection of articles, memoirs and documents relative to the history of the Comintern which was published in 1965. The materials were selected with bias. In the introduction the editor criticises the Comintern's policy in the national and colonial questions, and says that by its decisions, organisational work and propaganda the Comintern helped to strengthen confidence in the world revolution and the triumph of communism. The Comintern, Freymond writes, mapped out "strategic manoeuvres", and charted ways which the Communist parties had to follow. The theses and resolutions—on the dictatorship of the proletariat, the international situation, on the national and colonial questions and others—which were adopted at the first four congresses of the Comintern had and continue to have a decisive influence on the international communist movement.¹ One "of the most vivid examples of this" are the theses on the national and colonial questions formulated at the Second Congress, which are a "strategic plan for the development of the revolutionary forces of the peoples of the colonies and the basic political line [of the Communists] today". Continuing our reading of Freymond's article we realise that all the above is merely a detour. He seeks to make another point. "A comparison of *The Supplementary Theses on the National and Colonial Questions* adopted in 1920 with the statement of the first Chinese delegate at the Afro-Asian Seminar in Algeria in February 1965," he writes, "discloses a complete identity of views." In order to substantiate this calumny he quotes the following passages from *The Supplementary Theses*: "The superprofits obtained through the exploitation of the colonies is the mainstay of contemporary capitalism. So long as this source of profits remains it will be difficult for the working class to overthrow capitalism. The overthrow of Europe's colonial supremacy by the proletarian revolution will result in a downfall of European capitalism."² He goes on to say that "the Chinese delegate

¹ Like all the other Trotskyites Freymond maintains that the Comintern carried on revolutionary work only up to 1924, i.e., until Trotsky ceased to take part in its activity.

² Freymond takes this quotation from a collection of documents about the first four congresses of the Comintern published by the Trotskyites.

applied the same strategy to contemporary reality in his speech in Algeria".¹

What is the essence of Freymond's assertions? He reduces the Comintern's strategy and tactics in the national and colonial questions only to Roy's *Supplementary Theses*. But he deliberately does not mention Roy. Freymond ignores the main theses advanced by Lenin, his numerous works and statements on this issue and the decisions of other Comintern congresses. He does this in spite of the fact that anyone attempting to draw a "global" conclusion should refer to these documents and views in the first place.

In his studies Freymond does not confine himself solely to absolutising only this document which, moreover, is not the main one (a method practised by the majority of the falsifiers of the history of the Comintern). He also juggles with it and in such a manner that it reflects his fixed idea and not the actual state of affairs. For instance, he quotes the following phrase from Article 4 of *The Supplementary Theses*: "The overthrow of Europe's colonial supremacy by the proletarian revolution will result in the downfall of European capitalism." He stops here because, as we shall see, the claim that *The Supplementary Theses* are identical with the views of Mao Tse-tung and his adherents is not confirmed by the remaining part of Article 4. The quotation, however, is confusing, for it is not clear whether the proletarian revolution is to take place in the colonies or in Europe.

A researcher with any degree of honesty would have first checked this quotation by studying official documents such as the collection *The Communist International. Documents 1919-1932* (Moscow, 1933), or *The Second Congress of the Comintern. Verbatim Report* (Moscow, 1934), or the text of *The Supplementary Theses* included in the section "Documents and Materials" in Vol. 25 of the second edition of Lenin's *Collected Works*. Two of the sources contain the original text of Article 4: "Secession of colonies and a proletarian revolution in home countries will overthrow the capitalist system in Europe."² The third source, which con-

¹ *Contributions à l'histoire du Comintern. Publiées sous la direction de Jacques Freymond, Genève, 1965, pp. XXII-XXIII.*

² See also: *The Communist International in Documents, p. 130* (in Russian).

tains stylistic changes, reads essentially the same: "The breaking up of the colonial empire, together with the proletarian revolution in the home country, will overthrow the capitalist system in Europe."¹

A simple collation of the texts of the documents exposes Freymond efforts to ascribe Roy's concept about the primacy of the national liberation revolutions in the world revolutionary process to the Second Congress of the Comintern and thus establish a direct link between the decisions of the Congress and the theories of Mao Tse-tung and his adherents. Particularly important in this respect is the concluding sentence of Article 4 which Freymond passes over in silence. It reads: "The joint actions of these forces [the forces of the proletarian revolution and the national liberation movements—G. S.] are necessary in order to secure the final success of the world revolution."

It should be noted that the text of the first part of Article 4 was proposed by Roy. It was criticised by the commission of the Congress, altered and then approved at a plenary meeting of the Congress. The last sentence was proposed by the commission and included into the theses at the plenary meeting. Freymond's reasoning is aimed at portraying the nationalist, hegemonistic policy of the Maoists as consistent implementation of the Comintern's decisions and consequently to discredit them.

* * *

Sixty years have passed since the founding of the Communist International. In this historically short period of time the revolutionary process has surged on unabated. The mainstays of the old society crumbled and the foundations of a new society—socialism—are rising on their ruins. Hundreds of millions of people who only yesterday were living in subjection are now making their own history and resolutely fighting for freedom, independence, democracy and socialism. The economic, social and cultural policy of imperialism which condemned a vast majority of the world's population to poverty, hunger, ignorance, and arbitrary rule awakened these peoples to a determined struggle for elementary and inalienable human rights. The October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the rout of German fascism and

¹ *The Second Congress...*, p. 115.

Japanese militarism and the subsequent victories of socialism in other countries have become a catalyst of the historic process of the replacement of capitalism by socialism. The colonial system of imperialism disintegrated.

The national liberation movement has won its first battle. But the fight continues. The peoples which have won national independence now face a task that is no less difficult and complex, namely to surmount their economic and cultural backwardness. Capitalism has discredited itself. The peoples begin to view the non-capitalist road as a road of progressive social development which is consistent with their interests. Imperialism wants to stop, or at least to slow down the march of time, and resorts to economic pressure and blackmail; it incites social and racial conflicts, pushes the peoples into tribal, civil and inter-state wars, spares no effort to help the forces of reaction and resorts to direct military intervention and aggression. The task of consolidating the unity of the revolutionary forces remains on the agenda. In this decisive clash between the forces of the old and new worlds a specific role is played by theoreticians of anti-communism. They strive to smear the Leninist policy of the Communist parties in the national and colonial questions, and set the developing countries at odds with the USSR and other socialist countries and with the world proletariat. There is no better way of ascertaining the correctness of historical concepts than to see if they survive the test of time. The past years have fully confirmed Lenin's premises set forth in the "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions" adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern. "World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouped, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries, and, on the other, all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities, who are learning from bitter experience that their only salvation lies in the Soviet system's victory over world imperialism."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 146.

THE COMINTERN AND THE RISE OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN CHINA (1920-1927)

V. I. GLUNIN

The Chinese national revolution of 1925-27 was the most powerful expression of the rising national liberation movement that swept the colonial world after the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. It became a force which shook the whole of the Asian continent.

Owing to a range of external and internal factors the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 was in a sense unique. It manifested some of the specific features of colonial revolutions, which Lenin had foreseen when he said that revolutions in the East would have an ever greater number of specific features than the Russian revolution. At the same time the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 incontrovertibly confirmed Lenin's idea about the unity of the anti-imperialist forces and a single, indivisible world revolutionary process, which the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia had inaugurated.

An objective analysis of the history of the Chinese revolution, particularly of the role played by the Comintern and its contribution to the study of theoretical and practical problems of the Chinese revolution is of the greatest topical significance, because for many years the history of the Chinese revolution and the CPC has been grossly falsified both by bourgeois historians and the Maoist group. Their purpose is to interpret the history of the CPC and the Chinese revolution so as to serve the political goals of the Maoists, and to present individual aspects of the CPC's experience and mainly the ideas of Mao Tse-tung as a universal

truth and an obligatory recipe for the revolutionary movement of all countries and peoples.

A key feature of the Maoist falsification of history is slightly veiled attacks on the Comintern's line under the pretext of criticising various, often imaginary, right and left deviations in the CPC itself. As regards the attack on the policy and traditions of the Comintern it is frequently conducted from Trotskyite or semi-Trotskyite positions. In Chinese works on the history of the CPC and the Chinese revolution there are many examples of direct revival of Trotskyite arguments against the Comintern's line in the Chinese question.

Another and no less characteristic method of decrying the Comintern's line and counterposing to it the "line of Mao Tse-tung" is either belittling or completely ignoring its contribution to the development of the Chinese revolution. Prior to 1927, when Mao Tse-tung was not an important figure in the CPC leadership, some services rendered by the Comintern are recognised, but only briefly and in passing with an emphasis on the general theory of one or another issue. But there is no word about the Comintern in the Maoist history of subsequent stages of the Chinese revolution, and no direct reference to its numerous decisions on the Chinese question in the 1930s and 1940s. In this respect the Maoist falsifiers of history have gone even further than the Western bourgeois Sinologists specialising in anti-communist propaganda.

THE MAIN DIRECTIONS OF THE COMINTERN'S POLICY IN CHINA

The Comintern's guiding theoretical, political and organisational activity is seen in the revolutionary movement in China more than in any other country of the colonial world. All the key strategy and tactics of the Comintern in the national liberation movements in the East, ranging from independent class actions of the workers and the peasant masses to the tactic of a united front and national liberation war, were carried into life in the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. The experience of the Chinese revolution on the whole corroborated the Comintern's basic directions and

thus offered further proof of the international significance of Marxism-Leninism.

The fundamental theoretical and practical problem which the Comintern had to solve in China from the very outset concerned the correlation of national and class interests in the national liberation movement. On the general theoretical plane this key problem was solved by Lenin at the Second Congress of the Comintern which repudiated the left-sectarian views of M. N. Roy, A. Sultan Zade and others.¹

But the implementation of these general theoretical, and unquestionably fundamental, propositions in China immediately encountered certain difficulties so that it was necessary to formulate and experimentally test a wide range of additional theoretical and political problems arising from revolutionary practice in China. The theoretical propositions already available in Marxist-Leninist theory did not always provide a satisfactory explanation and solution to the problems of the Chinese revolution. The Comintern, therefore, had to come forward with new theoretical propositions and practical decisions.

The general course of the Comintern's policy in China from 1920 to 1927 may be formulated as follows: (a) to assemble and consolidate revolutionary Marxist forces in the CPC's ranks, to form and train Marxist cadres for the communist movement in China, help it to overcome its fragmentation, narrow-mindedness and sectarianism, and create a mass political party of the proletariat; (b) to make Marxism the ideology of the mounting working-class movement, secure its alliance with the peasant movement and foster Communist-led independent class organisations of the working class and the peasantry; (c) to bring the Communists into the national revolutionary movement, which was represented by the Kuomintang at the time, and to establish a united anti-imperialist front in which the proletariat in the course of class battles was to strive to attain the role of hegemon of the revolution so as to shift China's development to the non-capitalist road.

¹ See: V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 240-45.

THE ORGANISATIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

The Comintern's main tasks in China, just as in other countries of the East, was to unite the dispersed communist elements into a political party of the proletariat and organisationally consolidate the communist movement.

In early 1920 the Comintern sent a group of workers headed by G. N. Voitinsky to China.¹

Initially the Comintern chose Shanghai, a major industrial and proletarian centre, as the base for its activity in China. Voitinsky, as K. Sokolov-Strakhov wrote in January 1921, was the "life and soul" of all the efforts to establish communist circles. With his help the first communist circle of five people headed by Chen Tu-hsiu was set up in Shanghai in May 1920. In August G. N. Voitinsky informed the ECCI that a socialist youth union was organised and the publication of the weekly journal *Chinese Worker* was started in Shanghai. In Northern China G. N. Voitinsky took part in the organisation of communist circles through Professor S. A. Polevoy's group. The editorial staff of the *Hsin-chingnien* journal was placed at the head of the activity of the communist groups. This revolutionary-democratic journal which had been published by Chen Tu-hsiu since 1915 and grouped round itself the radical revolutionary intelligentsia, turned into a communist publication in 1920. G. N. Voitinsky wrote a number of articles for it.

Thus the first communist groups in China were set up with the direct participation of the Comintern which furnished the Chinese Communists organisational and other assistance. It should be mentioned that prior to the arrival of

¹ Grigory Naumovich Voitinsky (Zarkhin) (1893-1953) joined the RCP(B) in 1918. In 1920 he became an executive of the Eastern Secretariat of the ECCI: head of the Far Eastern Section, deputy head of the Eastern Section, member of the Far Eastern Bureau of the ECCI Eastern Department (together with Sen Katayama and H. Maring). In the 1920s on several occasions he visited China where he fulfilled responsible missions on behalf of the ECCI. In the 1930s he went over to scientific and teaching work. (See: S. L. Tikhvinsky, *Sun Yat-sen*, Moscow, 1964, p. 255 (in Russian). For details about G. N. Voitinsky's first mission to China also see: Chiu Lao-jên, "Before and After the Formation of the Communist Party of China," *Hsin-kuanha*, 1957, No. 13 (in Chinese).

the Comintern delegation no one in China had ever raised the question of forming a Communist party.

The formation of the first communist groups inaugurated an organised communist movement in China. But the name "communist" reflected a tendency rather than the actual state of the communist circles which as regards their composition and level of ideological and political maturity were still far from Marxism.

In our opinion the most relevant description of the communist groups which appeared in 1920 in China and also among the Chinese émigrés in France, is given by P. A. Mif: "At first they were propagandistic groups assimilating the basic principles of Marxism. The first cadres of the communist movement in China were formed in these circles."¹ The composition of these groups was rather heterogeneous, and not all their members were confirmed Communists. Among them were adherents of anarchism, legal Marxism and also chance fellow-travellers of communism, nationalists temporarily under the influence of socialist teachings. For a short time Chen Kung-po, Tai Chi-tao, Chou Fo-hai, Kan Nai-kuang, Shao Li-tsu and some other people who later became prominent functionaries of the reactionary Kuomintang participated in the communist movement.²

It was on the basis of such intellectual, chiefly propagandistic and fairly heterogeneous, groups making only the first efforts to establish links with the working-class movement that the Communist Party of China was formed. The establishment of the CPC was proclaimed at its congress in Shanghai in July 1921.

H. Maring, the Comintern's first official representative in China, and Nikolsky, an official of the Red Trade Union International attended the First Congress of the CPC. Maring advised the Congress that special attention should be centred on the formation of workers' organisations, and also took part in drawing up the Party Rules and its plan of work. Nikolsky described the situation in Soviet

¹ P. Mif, *Fifteen Years of Heroic Struggle*, Moscow, 1936, pp. 16-17 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 17; also see: S. Kalachyov, "A Short Essay on the Communist Party of China", *Canton*, 1926, No. 10, p. 33.

Russia and informed the Congress about the formation of the Far Eastern Bureau of the ECCI in Irkutsk.

Referring to the role played by the First Congress in the history of the CPC, Chinese historians maintain that its main service was that it laid the Party's organisational foundations. There is some truth in this although contrary to their assertions the organisational problems of the CPC were not resolved once and for all at this Congress.

The First Congress merely proclaimed the formation of the Party, which until the end of 1925 was more a conglomeration of circles than a party. In the first years its membership was small: when the First Congress took place it had approximately 50 members, by the Second Congress (1922) its membership increased to 120, by the Third Congress (1923) to 230, by the Fourth Congress (January 1925) to 950. Most of the membership were intellectuals. A turning point in the numerical growth and the class composition of the Party as well as in its organisational structure took place only in the wake of mass political action by the working class in the summer of 1925 which came to be known as the May 30th Movement. Towards the end of the year the Party numbered 4,000 members with workers accounting for more than 50 per cent. But its links with the peasantry were still inadequate. At the end of 1925 it had only 100 peasants (almost all of them in Kwantung) in its ranks, or approximately 2.5 per cent of its total membership. When the Fifth Congress convened in 1927 the Party already had 60,000 members.¹

The general state of the CPC between 1921 and 1927 was one of transition from propagandistic Marxist circles to a united political party in the full sense of the word. It has to be recognised that it was a fairly short period and the main factors which accelerated this transition were, first, the objective demands of the mounting revolutionary upswing in China, and second, the persistent efforts of the Comintern to surmount the fragmentation and turn the CPC into a mass proletarian party of the Bolshevik type which in the end could become the leader of the national liberation movement in the country. This policy can be traced by

¹ Miao Chu-hung, *A Short History of the Communist Party of China*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 17, 20, 27, 36 (in Russian).

studying pertinent documents of the Comintern beginning with 1922.

The CPC's fragmentation and its lack of contact with the masses were sharply criticised at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern.¹ In its resolution of January 12, 1923 concerning the CPC's attitude to the Kuomintang the ECCI set the task of preparing a basis for the establishment of a powerful mass Marxist party.² This task was also formulated in the ECCI directive to the Third Congress of the CPC in May 1923 which said: "It is the primary task of the Communists to strengthen the Communist Party and transform it into a mass party of the proletariat, and to gather the forces of the working class in the trade unions."³

There is no doubt that the fragmentation of the CPC would have lasted for many years if not for the assistance of the Comintern, the funds and the training of cadres at the Communist University of the Peoples of the East and other educational institutions, and the painstaking political and organisational work of its representatives in China.

RELiance ON THE WORKING CLASS

Alongside the organisational problems, the main tasks facing the emergent communist movement in China was that of working out the CPC's political programme, i. e., a new concept of the Chinese revolution on the basis of a Marxist-Leninist theory, and solving urgent tactical problems in the rapidly changing political situation.

The spread of Marxism-Leninism as a new scientific theory of the cognisance and transformation of the world is a complicated, lengthy and at times a rather contradictory process, and such it was in China, too. The formation of the CPC marked only the beginning of a consistent organised

¹ See: *Bulletin of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, 1922, No. 20, p. 17.

² See: *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the National and Colonial Revolution. The Example of China*, Moscow, 1934, p. 112 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

study of the Marxist theory and its implementation in the light of Chinese reality. Without in the least underestimating the role played by internal objective reasons for the spread of Marxism-Leninism in the country which were rooted in the profound social and national conflicts and in the imperialist exploitation of that great country, and doing justice to the courage and creative quest of the Chinese Communists, it is also necessary to do justice to the international assistance of the Comintern and the CPSU that played a great role in evolving the theoretical and political foundations for the Marxist concept of the Chinese revolution, in building up and consolidating the Party and training its leading cadres and activists.

Needless to say the development of scientific, Marxist-Leninist concept of the Chinese revolution as a component of the general strategy and tactics of the world communist movement was a long historical process in which both internal and external factors closely interacted.

The rapid spread of Marxism in China as a teaching whose objective content provided an answer to the urgent problems of the country's development and its revolutionary movement, is mentioned in all Sinological works. But very few of them raise the question which of the Marxist propositions were more easily understood by the Chinese working-class and the communist movement, and which were grasped with difficulty or not at all. Yet a concrete reply to this question would have been of great help in ascertaining the peculiarities of the development of the CPC and providing an objective account of the Comintern's activities in China.

As applied to the theme and the period examined in this article, it is possible on the basis of a study of the documents of the CPC and the Comintern to draw the conclusion that out of the wealth of Marxist-Leninist ideas, the CPC at first found it the easiest to assimilate the idea of the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie, the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power. In the early 1920s the CPC, most of its membership and leaders comprised of intellectuals, quite definitely relied primarily on the Chinese and the international working class as the new social force upon which China's historical future

depended. Already at its First Congress the CPC rebuffed liquidatory attempts to orientate the Party chiefly on the intellectual, petty-bourgeois sections. In its very first documents the CPC firmly stated that its main concern was the political education of the Chinese proletariat and its organisation into an independent force in the struggle for its social emancipation, and devoted special attention to the trade union movement.¹ In the 1920s there was no serious opposition in the CPC to its predominant reliance on the working class. Right from the beginning the Party concentrated on political education of the working class and the organisation of an independent class-conscious trade union movement. Between 1925 and 1927, when the revolution was at its height, the CPC was already the recognised sole leader of the Chinese proletariat's determined class struggle. In that period the CPC became a proletarian party also in terms of its composition: when the Fifth CPC Congress met in April and May 1927, workers accounted for 53.8 per cent of the Party membership.

The Chinese Communists conducted political and organisational activity among the workers under the leadership of the Comintern and in constant contact with its representatives in China (M. M. Borodin, G. N. Voitinsky and others). Close links were established between the Chinese trade unions and the Red International of Labour Unions; representatives of the Red International of Labour Unions and the Communist Youth International (L. Geller, S. Dalin, G. Mandalyan and others) were active in China. The advice and the practical assistance of the Comintern, the Red International of Labour Unions and the Communist Youth International and their representatives in China played a truly inestimable role in the rise and development of the Chinese working-class movement in the 1920s. With regard to the problems of the labour movement proper, the CPC and the Comintern in the 1920s had on the whole worked out an understanding and there were no serious difficulties in this field.

¹ Chen Pan-tsu, "Reminiscences of the First Congress of the Communist Party of China", *The Communist International*, London, Vol. XIII, No. 9, 1936, pp. 593-96.

THE PROBLEM OF THE UNITED NATIONAL ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT

It was much more difficult for the Chinese Communists to understand the general problems of the Chinese revolution and to draw up and test in practice the political programme and the strategy and tactics of the CPC in the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. One of the most complex issues of the Chinese revolution for the CPC was the theoretical and tactical problem of the combination and interaction of the national and class aspects of the revolutionary movement.

Because of the specific nature of the situation in China at the time the formation of a united front became the key objective of the whole of the Comintern's practical activity in that country up to the latter half of 1927.

Apart from helping to organise the Communist Party and the working-class movement, the Comintern, from the moment it began its work in China, actively searched for contacts and forms of co-operation with the national revolutionary group of the Kuomintang headed by Sun Yat-sen. Fully in keeping with this policy were Soviet diplomatic efforts designed to establish relations with the government of Sun Yat-sen.

The very first mission of the Comintern which arrived in China in 1920 set up direct contact with Kuomintang's leader Sun Yat-sen. The Comintern's representative G. N. Voitinsky met Sun Yat-sen in Shanghai at the end of 1920,¹ and then went to Kwangchow (Canton) where he had talks with the Kuomintang. H. Maring and S. Dalin met Sun Yat-sen in 1921 and 1922.² The Comintern continued energetically to accumulate information about the Kuomintang and the Canton government. Reports filed by Comintern representatives in 1921 and 1922 were unanimous in their positive assessment of the Kuomintang's revolutionary activity and said that no time should be lost in setting up contacts with the Canton government. On the other hand

¹ G. N. Voitinsky, "My Meetings with Sun Yat-sen", *Pravda*, March, 15, 1925.

² S. A. Dalin, "The Great Turning Point", *Sun Yat-sen, 1866-1966*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 255-85 (in Russian).

these documents reveal an inadequate knowledge of the social basis of the Kuomintang and its individual groupings and of its programme and political activity which led to the rise of certain illusions concerning the activity of the Kuomintang and some of its leaders. All this was reflected in articles on China published in *The Communist International journal* in 1921 and 1922.¹

Although the ECCI issued its first official instruction concerning co-operation between the CPC and the Kuomintang in August 1922, facts show that the Comintern began to search for links with the Kuomintang immediately after the Second Congress, and worked to establish contacts with it, exerting corresponding influence upon the CPC through its representatives in China.

What was the attitude of the CPC to this policy of the Comintern? How did the decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern on the national and colonial questions influence the Programme and tactics of the CPC?

The First Congress of the CPC which took place in July 1921, exactly a year after the Second Congress of the Comintern, practically did not take the resolution on the national and colonial questions into consideration in its decisions. After a heated discussion the First Congress of the CPC adopted "The First Decision of the Aims of the CPC" which rejected any co-operation with other parties: "Towards the existing political parties ... an attitude of independence, aggression, and exclusion should be adopted. In the political struggle, in opposition to militarism and bureaucracy, and in demanding freedom of speech, press and assembly, our party should stand in behalf of the proletariat. No relation with other parties or groups is allowed."² This was a purely sectarian stand to which the criticism contained in Lenin's "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*" can be fully applied.

¹ See: V. Vilensky (Sibiryakov), "On the Eve of the Formation of the Communist Party in China", *The Communist International*, No. 16, pp. 3585-94 (in Russian); H. Maring, "The Revolutionary Nationalist Movement in South China", *The Communist International*, 1922, Special Congress Number, pp. 66-70.

² Chen Kung-po, *The Communist Movement in China*, New York, 1966, pp. 80-81.

The initial sharply negative attitude of the CPC to participating in the Kuomintang is also clearly seen in Chen Tu-hsiu's letter to G. N. Voitinsky of April 6, 1922. Mentioning that Maring had tabled a motion that the CPC and the Communist Youth League should enter the Kuomintang, Chen Tu-hsiu wrote: "We are categorically against this." The main reason for the refusal to co-operate with the Kuomintang, according to Chen Tu-hsiu, was that they had "totally different goals and a different revolutionary base". Apparently at the time the majority of the CPC members shared this point of view, for in this letter Chen Tu-hsiu informed Voitinsky that "the question of entering the Kuomintang had already been examined at the meetings of the comrades in Kwangtung, Shanghai, Peking, Changsha and Wuhan and everywhere evoked a most negative attitude. In fact there is no possibility of entering the Kuomintang."

It was only after the CPC Central Committee had studied the decisions of the Congress of the Peoples of the Far East that its attitude shifted towards co-operation with the Kuomintang.

While previously the CPC regarded the accomplishment of a social revolution as its main task and attached only secondary importance to the slogan of the anti-imperialist movement, after the Congress of the Peoples of the Far East, the Chinese Communists began to give priority to the struggle against imperialism. The general theoretical premise, initially not quite comprehended by the CPC, that the Chinese revolution was part of the world revolution now became filled with a concrete content—the struggle for the formation of a united anti-imperialist front. As a result of the participation of the Chinese Communists in the Congress of the Peoples of the Far East the CPC Central Committee in June and July 1922 "for the first time officially included the idea of co-operation between the CPC and the Kuomintang into the agenda of the Chinese revolution".¹ Chen Tu-hsiu, who until then was against co-operation with the Kuomintang, now modified his stand somewhat.

¹ See: Chang Kuo-tao, "My Reminiscences", *Mingpao*, 1966, No. 8, p. 74.

In a letter to G. N. Voitinsky of June 30, 1922, he no longer categorically ruled out the possibility of co-operating with the Kuomintang and said that there was some hope that the Sun Yat-senites would "temporarily follow the same road with us".

The slogan of a united front in China and a concrete platform for it were formulated by the Chinese Communists in the "Declaration of the CPC on the Situation in the Country" of June 15, 1922.¹

Its main premises were approved by the Second Congress of the CPC in July 1922 and were embodied in its Declaration usually regarded as the immediate programme of the CPC.

The Second Congress adopted a special resolution concerning the establishment of a united front with the nationalists (i.e., with the Kuomintang), which said: "We should unite all the revolutionary parties, organize a joint battle line with the nationalists in order to realize our objective of overthrowing the feudal militarist party and imperialist oppression, and to establish a real democratic independent nation. We should summon all the workers and peasants to join the struggle under our banner...."

"... we are not sacrificing ourselves for the nationalists but fight only to gain temporary freedom. The proletariat must not forget their own independent organization during the struggle."²

Thus, the Second Congress of the CPC accepted the Comintern's recommendation to form an alliance with the Kuomintang's revolutionary elements grouped round Sun Yat-sen, and at the same time fully preserve the CPC's organisational and political independence. The resolutions of the Second Congress of the CPC differed greatly from the sectarian stand of the First Congress. They showed that in the short period of one year separating these two congresses, the Party had moved a long way towards a better understanding of the tasks facing the Communists in a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Clearly this evolution was due

¹ Reference Materials on the History of the Chinese Revolution, Issue 1, Peking, 1957, pp. 9-19 (in Chinese).

² See: Chen Kung-po, *The Communist Movement...*, p. 120.

to the results of the Comintern's great work in the CPC. Nevertheless, the assimilation of the Comintern's Leninist strategy and tactics by the Chinese Communists proved to be a very contradictory process. It can be gathered from the decisions of the Second Congress of the CPC that while agreeing to co-operate with the Kuomintang the Congress, nevertheless, did not follow the advice of the Comintern's representative Maring that the Communists should join the Kuomintang, or to be precise, they simply passed it over in silence thus indicating their negative attitude to it.

The Second Congress of the CPC also decided that the Party should join the Comintern. In August 1922, the Comintern issued direct instructions for the Communists to enter the Kuomintang which were reflected in the ECCI directives to its representatives in Southern China.

THE FORM OF THE UNITED FRONT. ECCI DIRECTIVE OF JANUARY 12, 1923

When it suggested that the Chinese Communists should join the Kuomintang, the Comintern was aware of the latter's weakness as a revolutionary party and sought to help it reorganise into a truly mass national revolutionary party relying mainly on workers and peasants. That this was the intention of the ECCI is confirmed by H. Maring in an article entitled "The Revolutionary Nationalist Movement in Southern China" published in the September 1922 issue of *The Communist International*. "In China, where the proletariat is only just beginning to develop," he wrote, "we must carry out the theses adopted by the Second Congress in such a manner as to lend real support to the revolutionary nationalists of the south. It is our duty to further the consolidation of these revolutionary-nationalist elements and try to give the whole movement a left-ward direction."¹ The entry of the Communists into the Kuomintang was to serve this purpose. Evaluating the prospects of such tactics, Maring drew the following conclusion: "This state of affairs [in China—V. G.] determines the inclination

¹ *The Communist International*, 1922, Special Congress Number, p. 70.

among the leaders of the revolutionary movement to co-operate with Soviet Russia and furnishes the opportunity for us Communists to carry on important and fruitful work in accord with that movement".¹

At a conference which took place on August 29 and 30, 1922 and was attended by H. Maring the CC CPC officially adopted a tactic for getting the Communists to join the Kuomintang.

But not being absolutely sure that it was necessary to create a united front the sectarian-minded leading cadres of the Party accepted the ECCI directives formally, in words only, and impeded their implementation. In fact, right up to 1924 there was no genuine shift in the CPC's attitude to the united front and the latter existed only on paper.

But a group of influential CPC members, including Li Ta-chao, Chu Chiu-po and Chang Tai-lei, was in favour of actively co-operating with the Kuomintang and supported the Comintern's policy. In a report the Third Congress of the Comintern in June 1921, Chang Tai-lei raised the question of establishing a "broad national movement" in China which "the Communist Party should use in the struggle against imperialism in general".² In the Eastern Commission of the Congress he backed Lenin's theses on the national and colonial questions and opposed M. N. Roy. He was also one of the initiators and organisers of the Congress of the Peoples of the Far East in Moscow.³ Chang Tai-lei also actively participated in H. Maring's and S. Dalin's talks with Sun Yat-sen. A very important contribution to the formation of a united national front in China was made by Li Ta-chao. In August 1922 he and Lin Po-chiu had talks with Sun Yat-sen concerning co-operation between the CPC and the Kuomintang. Li Ta-chao entered the Kuomintang in 1922 and was one of the first Chinese Communists to do so. His articles in favour of communist participation in

¹ *The Communist International, 1922*, Special Congress Number, p. 70.

² *The Peoples of the Far East*, Irkutsk, 1921, No. 3, pp. 335, 336 (in Russian).

³ M. A. Persits, *The Undelivered Report of Chang Tai-lei at the Third Congress of the Comintern* (manuscript), p. 1 (in Russian).

the Kuomintang published by the Party press became widely known.¹ He was also very active in the preparations for and the convocation of the First Congress of the Kuomintang where he delivered an impressive speech against the attacks of right-wing Kuomintang members on CPC policy.²

The tactic of a united anti-imperialist front in the national liberation movement, as we know, was proclaimed at the Second Congress of the Comintern. The Fourth Congress which was held in November and December 1922 proclaimed it an urgent practical objective for the Communists of the Eastern countries. It is logical to assume that the Congress took into account the practical experience which the ECCI acquired in China when it formulated the tactic of a united anti-imperialist front. Chen Tu-hsiu, the then leader of the CPC, was on the commission which drew up the theses on the Eastern question.³

In elaboration of these theses and in conformity with conditions in China, the ECCI on January 12, 1923, adopted a special resolution "On the Attitude of the Communist Party of China to the Party of the Kuomintang". Taking into account that a) "China's central task is a national revolution against the imperialists and their internal feudal agents"; b) "the working class is directly concerned with resolving this national problem, but is still inadequately differentiated as an absolutely independent social force"; and c) "the only serious national revolutionary group in China is the Kuomintang Party which relies partly on the liberal-democratic and petty bourgeoisie and partly on the intelligentsia and the workers", the ECCI considered that "coordinated actions between the Kuomintang Party and the young CPC were necessary". The entry of the Communists into the Kuomintang was to be the concrete form of this united front. "Under the present conditions it is expedient for members of the CPC to remain in the Kuomintang Party".⁴

¹ See: Li Ta-chao, "Spread the Influence of the Kuomintang Throughout China", *Hsiangtao*, No. 21, pp. 154-55.

² See: A. I. Cherepanov, *Notes of a Military Adviser in China*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 79-80 (in Russian).

³ *Bulletin of the Fourth Congress...*, 1922, No. 20, p. 19.

⁴ *The Strategy and Tactics...*, p. 112 (in Russian).

In the light of the attempts which subsequently were made by Chen Tu-hsiu and some other CPC officials, to put a false colouring on the Comintern's policy by alleging that the latter was pushing the CPC into submergence within the Kuomintang, it is important to note the conditions under which the ECCI envisaged the entry of the Communists into the Kuomintang. It underscored that this entry should not be bought at the price of destroying the CPC's political image. "The Party," the ECCI said, "should preserve its own organisation with a strictly centralised apparatus. The CPC's important specific tasks should be organisation and education of the labour masses and formation of trade unions with the view to laying the foundation for a powerful mass Communist Party. The CPC should conduct this work under its own banner, independently of any other political group, and at the same time avoiding conflicts with the national revolutionary movement.... While supporting the Kuomintang Party in all campaigns on the national revolutionary front inasmuch as it conducts an objectively correct policy, the CPC nevertheless, should not fuse with it and should hoist its own banner during these campaigns."¹ The ECCI directive to the Third Congress of the CPC in May 1923 was drawn up in the same spirit.² Thus the ECCI defined its attitude to the CPC-Kuomintang co-operation with the utmost clarity. It ruled out all false interpretations and was fully in line with the decisions of the Second and Fourth congresses of the Comintern.

The decisions of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern and the ECCI resolution of January 12, 1923 put an end to open attacks in the ranks of the CPC on the idea of forming a united anti-imperialist front with the Kuomintang. Beginning with 1923 the struggle over the tactics of united front shifted into the plane of arguments concerning the form in which the CPC should co-operate with the Kuomintang. This struggle continued until the Kuomintang's betrayal in 1927. Specifically, it was a question of the tactics, recommended by the Comintern, of the individual entry of the Communists into the Kuomintang with the view to turning the latter into a broad political organisation of the

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics...*, p. 112.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 114-16.

united front capable of leading the national revolution in China to victory.

What made the Comintern suggest that the CPC should carry the idea of a united front into reality through the entry of the Communists into the Kuomintang? How did this decision influence the proletariat's struggle for hegemony? The answer is to be found in the resolution of the ECCI of January 12, 1923 and in the ECCI directive to the Third Congress of the CPC. The ECCI proceeded from the fact that the working-class movement and the Communist Party in China were still weak and that for the time being the bourgeoisie, i. e. the Kuomintang, was at the head of the revolution. If by then the proletariat had already established its hegemony in China and the country had a powerful organised labour movement and a powerful mass Communist Party, there would be no need for the Communists to enter the Kuomintang. Moreover, this step would have thrown the entire movement back.

When recommending the Chinese Communists to work inside the Kuomintang the Comintern regarded this as an effective means of bringing the CPC in broad contact with the masses and turning it within the shortest possible time into an influential mass political party relying on a well organised and powerful working-class and peasant movement led by the party, not the bourgeoisie. The CPC's shift towards closer co-operation with the Kuomintang was also prompted by the political events which took place in China in early 1923 and the progressive change in Sun Yat-sen's policy.

In 1922 there was an upsurge in the Chinese working-class movement, and the CPC, influenced by the Comintern, began to surmount its fragmented seclusion and join the working-class movement. Communist organisations in Northern and Central China worked hard to open workers' schools and clubs, establish trade unions and start communist periodicals. They were most successful in organising the railway workers of the Peking-Hankow Railway. In the South, however, the labour movement continued to remain almost wholly under Kuomintang influence. Thanks to efforts of the Communists the labour movement became better organised, more militant and politically aware. At the

same time the first successes of the movement led to excessive euphoria in the CPC, an overestimation of its actual potential at the time (the Fourth Congress of the Comintern warned the Chinese Communists against making this mistake). As a result, the "leftists" increased their efforts to withdraw into the shell of a "purely proletarian" movement, and adopted an even more negative attitude to a united anti-imperialist front.

The shooting down of the workers during the Peking-Hankow strike on February 7, 1923 and the ensuing general offensive of the reaction, the suppression of the trade unions and the decline of the working-class movement had a direct effect on the CPC. The Comintern took vigorous steps to help surmount the feeling of depression which was spreading in the Party. On March 3, 1923 the ECCI addressed a special appeal to the Chinese railway workers. It highly praised their heroism and appealed to the Chinese working class not to relinquish its hold of the "red banners of labour".¹

The defeat of the Peking-Hankow strike manifested the inability of the working class to wage a revolutionary struggle in isolation; it clearly needed mass allies. It was also clear once again that the formation of a united anti-imperialist front and an alliance between the CPC and the Kuomintang were matters of the greatest urgency. This was a powerful blow at "leftist" sentiments in the Party, although opposition to co-operation with the Kuomintang was not yet overcome.

The spring of 1923 saw a marked growth in contacts between the CPC and the Kuomintang. In March Chen Tu-hsiu went to Canton and established contact with Sun Yat-sen. After that Tsai Ho-shen, Chu Chiu-po and other prominent CPC officials also visited Canton. The CPC was allowed to carry on legal activities in the territory controlled by Sun Yat-sen's government.

The Third Congress of the CPC took place in Canton from June 10 to 19, 1923. The central issue on the agenda was the formation of a united front with the Kuomintang. A sharp debate over this question concentrated on the ECCI resolution of January 12, 1923.

¹ *Pravda*, March 5, 1923.

The point of the discussion was not so much the united front in general, but its form, i. e., the tactic of the entry of the Communists into the Kuomintang. The main struggle at the Congress took place between the majority led by Chen Tu-hsiu and H. Maring and Chang Kuo-tao's and Tsai Ho-shen's left-sectarian group. Mao Tse-tung who adhered to centrist positions and did not believe that it would be possible to build a mass proletarian party, or a mass national revolutionary party like the Kuomintang in China, finally decided to go with the majority, a step which helped him to become a member of the CPC Central Committee for the first time.

The Congress officially approved the Comintern's recommendation that Communists should join the Kuomintang individually, and at the same time keep the CPC's political and organisational independence intact.

In its resolution "On the Attitude to the National Movement and the Kuomintang", the Congress noted that the labour movement in China had not developed into a social independent force, that the working class was not yet a powerful and major force, and therefore it was impossible to build up an influential and large Communist Party, a mass party, which would be able to live up to the requirements of the revolution in the immediate future. It went on to say that the Communists ought to try and set up Kuomintang organisations throughout China and assemble all the revolutionary forces of China in the Kuomintang so as to be able to cope with the needs of the Chinese revolution. At the same time the resolution laid special emphasis on the principle of independence of the CPC: "Although we are entering the Kuomintang," it said, "we must remain an independent organisation and make every effort to draw revolutionary and class-conscious elements from among labour organisations and the left wing of the Kuomintang into our Party in order gradually to increase its membership and introduce strict discipline, thus creating a foundation for a powerful and large mass Communist Party." This was the standpoint of the majority at the Congress.

Nevertheless, the struggle over the forms of co-operation with the Kuomintang continued in the Party after the Congress too.

The decisions of the Third CPC Congress provided the correct guidelines for the Party's co-operation with the Kuomintang. Now the CPC squarely faced the problem of the Kuomintang's reorganisation into a mass people's revolutionary party. But even though the Party began to work quite intensively in this direction it achieved no significant results. In a report to the ECCI about its enlarged plenary meeting which took place on November 24 and 25, 1923, the CPC Central Committee said that the resolution of the Third Congress of CPC concerning the Party's relations with the Kuomintang was being poorly implemented because of the "diffident attitude of some comrades to the resolution", the sluggishness of the Kuomintang, "suspicion and divergent political views" between the Communists and members of the Kuomintang, and, finally, financial difficulties. The plan worked out by the CC CPC for setting up Kuomintang branches in central and northern China "failed", and only one branch, in Peking, was organised. After its Third Congress the Party went through another serious internal crisis. Its membership dwindled to one-fourth and towards the end of November 1923 totalled only about one hundred. The leader of the "leftists" Chang Kuo-tao, removed from the Central Committee for his opposition to the united front tactic, did not give up his divisive activities after the Congress. He entrenched himself in Peking and continued to attack the Congress' resolution concerning the Kuomintang as "erroneous" and "unrealistic", and sabotaged the Party's efforts to bring about reorganisation of the Kuomintang. In a letter to G. N. Voitinsky dated November 16, 1923, he wrote: "The plan of Comrades Chen Tu-hsiu and Maring has encountered difficulties and cannot be implemented at present", and added that the projected congress of the Kuomintang would "yield miserable results".

That the results of the CPC activity in the Kuomintang after the Third Congress were modest to say the least was confirmed by M. M. Borodin's first letters from Canton written in October and November 1923. His first impression of the CPC and Socialist Youth branches in Canton was that both of them functioned "extremely sluggishly owing to their isolation from the mass movement of the workers". Representative of the CPC Central Committee in Canton

Tan Ping-shan was fully immersed in the work of the Kuomintang propaganda department, but this work "had very little in common with the everyday life of the masses", and the decisions of the Third Congress concerning co-operation with the Kuomintang "remained on paper". In this connection Tan Ping-shan frankly told Borodin that he greatly doubted the possibility of reorganising the Kuomintang.

Negotiations between the CPC and the Kuomintang on the reorganisation of the latter began in 1922. But until October 1923 they yielded no tangible results. Although in the latter half of 1923 there was a definite shift in Sun Yat-sen's attitude in favour of more determined anti-imperialist actions and closer contacts with Soviet Russia and the CPC, he apparently did not regard the latter a sufficiently authoritative force and refrained from taking a decisive step in the matter of reorganising the Kuomintang and breaking down the prejudice of its right-wing members towards the Communists. The reorganisation of the Kuomintang got under way only after the Comintern gave its direct help. A major role in this was played by M. M. Borodin who replaced H. Maring as the Comintern's representative in China but who was endowed with broader powers.¹ A major contribution to the organisation of a united front was made by Chu Chiu-po who worked together with M. M. Borodin.

The extremely difficult work of reorganising the Kuomintang was crowned by its First Congress which took place in January 1924. The proceedings at this Congress and its historical significance have been described in numerous works by Soviet authors. We should only like to add that the Congress made a very profound impression on the CPC and considerably cooled the ardour of those of its members who opposed co-operation with the Kuomintang. Here is how S. Slepak, a correspondent of the Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA) in Peking in a letter to G. N. Voitinsky of February 8, 1924, described the change of mood in the CPC. Justifying the "leftist" opposition at the Third Congress of CPC on the grounds that, as he put it, they did not want to "work with a mirage", he wrote that now, when the

¹ See: S. L. Tikhvinsky, *Sun Yat-sen*, pp. 275-84 (in Russian).

Kuomintang became a party in practice, the attitude to it changed radically even on the part of Chang Kuo-tao who had attended the Kuomintang Congress: "Chang is full of admiration both for Sun Yat-sen himself and for the work conducted there in general. Chang says that now the comrades do not raise the question whether they should work in the Kuomintang or not. Now all of them work well and display great activity." Slepak who just half a year ago harshly criticised Sun Yat-sen now wrote that "Sun Yat-sen is for the Kuomintang what Lenin was for the RCP(B)."

The results of the Kuomintang Congress also made a deep impression on the Soviet Ambassador in China L. M. Karakhan. In a letter to People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs G. V. Chicherin dated February 9, 1924, he wrote: "The Communists are conducting themselves splendidly at the Congress. They are disciplined and do not complicate the general proceedings by 'left' communist statements." It is indicative that L. M. Karakhan was especially apprehensive that the Chinese Communists would make "left communist" speeches. He noted that even Chang Kuo-tao, the leader of the "left"-wing opposition, was filled with admiration for the Congress.

But however favourable were the decisions of the First Congress of the Kuomintang at the time, they alone could not resolve the serious contradictions in the party itself and between it and the CPC. Shortly afterwards these contradictions made themselves felt with fresh force and evoked a corresponding reaction from the Communists.

THE ECCI DIRECTIVE

TO THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE CPC.

THE PEASANT AND MILITARY QUESTIONS IN THE COMINTERN'S CHINA POLICY

An important document which sheds light on the process of the crystallisation of the Comintern's China policy in the period of the maturing of the national revolution, is the "ECCI Directive to the Third Congress of the Communist Party of China" of May 24, 1923.¹ In spite of the fact that it

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics...*, pp. 114-15.

was delayed en route and was received in Shanghai only on July 18 and consequently could not influence the proceedings at the Third Congress which took place a month earlier, it proved to be of great significance for the Party's subsequent activity.

Compared with the resolution of January 12, 1923 the directive of May 24, 1923 went much further in formulating the tasks of the national revolution in China and the tactics of the CPC.

The directive reaffirmed the proposition of the ECCI resolution of January 12 that the central problem in China was a national revolution against the imperialist and their internal feudal agents.¹ At the same time it defined more comprehensively the content of this revolution as a "broad political national movement", a "broad national democratic movement" relying on and involving "the widest masses of the Chinese democracy".² The organisation of precisely such a mass movement, it said, should become the central issue on the agenda of the forthcoming First Congress of the Kuomintang.

The ECCI maintained that the working class and the peasantry had to be the main social base of the national revolution in China. Consequently, it was a question of a radical popular revolution in that country.

The directive attached special significance to the agrarian revolution and the peasant question regarding it as the topmost: "The national revolution in China and the formation of an anti-imperialist front will be inevitably accompanied by an agrarian revolution of the peasantry against the vestiges of feudalism.... Thus it is the peasant question which is the central issue of the entire policy ... only by giving the slogans of an anti-imperialist front an agrarian basis can we hope for genuine success."³ Therefore it was the duty of the CPC as the political leader of the masses in a united front "continuously to push the Kuomintang Party towards an agrarian revolution".⁴

It should be noted that this directive, developing Lenin's

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

ideas expounded in the documents of the Second and Fourth congresses of the Comintern, was compiled at a time when there was no perceptible peasant movement in China. The CPC which actively worked among the workers had no contact whatever with the peasantry and was making only the first timid attempts theoretically to visualise the significance of the peasant question and not so much in a socio-economic (an anti-feudal agrarian revolution) as in a purely political sense (individual references to this are to be found in articles by Chen Tu-hsiu and other CPC theoreticians, in Chen Tu-hsiu's notes to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern and in his report on the peasant question at the Third Congress of the CPC). As regards Mao Tse-tung, whom Maoist and bourgeois historians portray as the creator of the agrarian theory in the Chinese revolution, he expressed his attitude to the peasantry and the peasant movement only three years later, and even then in very uncertain terms. Hence, the significance of the ECCI directive was that it also focussed the attention of the CPC, which had won certain positions in the town and among the working class, on the countryside and the peasants.

As far as we know, concrete slogans of the agrarian revolution in China were formulated for the first time on the basis of the general theoretical premises set forth in the ECCI directive of May 24, 1923.¹ This directive as we are inclined to believe, for the first time expounded the premise about the leadership of the CPC in the national liberation movement.

While the ECCI resolution of January 12, 1923 emphasised only the need for the working-class movement and the CPC to preserve their independence, the Comintern now directly raised the question of the leading role of the party of the working class, regarding it as a matter of course (without, however, using the term "hegemony of the proletariat".) Therefore the Comintern's main demand on the Kuomintang was to support the working class. "Our principal demand of the national democratic Kuomintang Party ought to be *unconditional support for the working-class movement in China, both in the North and South.*"²

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics...*, p. 114.

² *Ibid.*, p. 115.

It would be wrong to think, however, that by raising the question of the CPC's leading role, the ECCI directive actually meant that the proletariat should immediately strive for hegemony. All the documents issued by the Comintern and its officials, including its representatives in China, in 1923 (and before that, of course), make it absolutely clear that when the Comintern raised the question of the hegemony of the proletariat at the beginning of the 1920 (and up to the end of 1926) it regarded it only as a general perspective, a more or less remote goal, but one for which the political party of the Chinese working class should begin to struggle immediately. One confirmation of this is G. N. Voitinsky's article "The Proletariat and the National Movement in China", dated October 30, 1923.¹ He wrote that "the young proletariat of China is still a new factor in China's political life, and the influence of its Party, therefore, still lacks the strength" to influence decisively the revolutionary movement, including the Kuomintang policy. "The party of the Chinese proletariat is aware that at the given historical movement it cannot aspire to the role of the sole liberator of its people from imperialist oppression, but it knows better than all the other political groups in the country what roads the national movement should follow."² This sober and at the same time high estimation of the CPC's role was made in connection with the publication of the second Declaration of the CPC on the Political Situation (August 1, 1923).³

Finally the directive expressed the Comintern's attitude to the armed struggle which was in progress in China. "In the question of the civil war between Sun Yat-sen and the northern warlords we support Sun Yat-sen," it stated unequivocally.⁴ At the same time the Comintern noted that Sun Yat-sen should radically alter the character of his military operations turning them into a civil war of the broad masses against the northern warlords and foreign imperialists. In this connection the Comintern pointed out

¹ G. N. Voitinsky, "The Proletariat and the National Movement in China", *The New East*, No. 4, 1923, pp. 280-82 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 281.

³ See: *Reference Materials...*, Issue I, pp. 40-43.

⁴ *The Strategy and Tactics...*, p. 115.

to the CPC that "we should struggle in every way in the Kuomintang against Sun Yat-sen's military combinations with the *militarists* ... these combinations may result in degeneration of the Kuomintang movement into a movement of one militaristic group against others which will not only inevitably lead to a catastrophic disintegration of the national front but will also discredit workers' organisations and the Communist Party since they are at present becoming closely associated with the Kuomintang Party for the struggle against the imperialists and their agents in China."¹

In other words, the Comintern in effect raised the question of a people's liberation war in China against the militarists, feudal lords and foreign imperialists as a form of the development of the Chinese revolution. In keeping with this general proposition the CPSU(B) and the Soviet Government responded to Sun Yat-sen's request and actively helped the Kuomintang to raise and deploy the National Revolutionary Army of China and to plan and execute its military operations.

The idea of a revolutionary war and the formation of a people's revolutionary army was in itself not a new one for the CPC. In the past, too, it evoked a keen discussion in the Party press in connection with the civil war in China and the numerous projects for internal peace and political unification of the country (in the *Hsiangtao* journal, in articles by Chen Tu-hsiu, Tsai Ho-shen, Chu Chiu-po and others).² But although the CPC sharply condemned militaristic wars, criticised Sun Yat-sen's military combinations with the militarists and appealed to the people to launch a "revolutionary war" and raise a "people's army", it was still far from visualising how these general slogans could be translated into life.

In the light of these facts the Comintern should be given credit not only for orientating the Chinese revolutionaries on waging a people's war of liberation, but also for perceiving in Sun Yat-sen's military operations an embryo of the armed force which had to be raised and become a reliable bulwark in the people's war, and for outlining the general

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics*..., p. 115.

² *Hsiangtao*, No. 85 and other publications.

political patterns which had to be followed in order to achieve these objectives. In the subsequent years the Comintern continued actively to elaborate and improve the military strategy and tactics of the Chinese revolution, but the first steps in this direction were made in 1923.

OVERCOMING THE TENDENCY FOR THE ORGANISATIONAL DISSOLUTION OF THE CPC IN THE KUOMINTANG

The year 1924 was marked by the realisation of the Comintern's earlier recommendations on the Chinese question.

After the First Congress of the Kuomintang in January 1924, which was the first serious step towards implementing the Leninist policy of a united national anti-imperialist front in China, the Communist Party of China began to work actively in the Kuomintang. For about three months after the Congress the CPC centred its main efforts on organisational work in the Kuomintang hoping to set up as many local Kuomintang branches as possible and to boost their membership. Less attention was paid to political work in the Kuomintang in that period. It should be mentioned that the Communists, both in the centre and at the grass roots level, carried on their organisational work with great zeal and achieved considerable results. The Communists did in fact breathe a new life into the Kuomintang and in a short period of time built up a broad network of Kuomintang organisations in Northern, Central and Southern China.

In this work the Communists were guided by the CC CPC Resolution on the National Movement adopted in February 1924. Noting that "the national movement should be the Party's main work at present", the CC CPC observed: "The expansion of the Kuomintang and rectification of its political misconceptions should be the main concern of the national movement, for a large political party which can work openly is absolutely necessary for the development and guidance of a broad and powerful national movement." The reorganised Kuomintang was to become such a large legal political party. The resolution made the point that it was necessary to extend the mass basis of the Kuomintang

by drawing workers and peasants and also merchants, shop-assistants and students into its membership. As regards the political work in the Kuomintang and the rectification of its political errors, the CC CPC said that the Communists had to act in keeping with the national ideas of Sun Yat-sen and at the same time "force the Kuomintang to propagandise the anti-imperialist movement and take steps to strengthen it."

The CPC's organisational activity in the Kuomintang in early 1924 required the efforts of virtually the entire Party whose membership at the time was not more than 500, and kept it away from solving its own class tasks (work in the trade unions and the peasant movement, communist propaganda and so forth). Under these circumstances, individual weak communist branches inevitably became dissolved in the Kuomintang. On the whole, however, the Party did not forfeit its political, and particularly, organisational independence. A very categorical opinion on this score is to be found in G. N. Voitinsky's letter to Petrov (F. F. Raskolnikov) of April 24, 1924: "The view that the Chinese Communists have allegedly become dispersed in the national movement and the youth (Communist) now represent the basic communist cadres, is absolutely ridiculous and unfounded.... There is no sign of ideological 'fraternisation' on the part of our comrades with Kuomintang members; on the contrary the more they have to deal with the nationalists, the greater is their awareness of their ideological alienation from these elements". Nonetheless the ECCI was evidently worried about the situation and found it necessary to eliminate the deviation which was beginning to appear in the work of the CPC. Judging by his letter G. N. Voitinsky was entrusted with this task as a representative of the Comintern.

It did not prove to be too difficult to overcome the CPC's temporary excessive enthusiasm for organisational work in the Kuomintang. The very situation which took shape in the Kuomintang by the spring of 1924 was not conducive to the further spread of populist illusions entertained by part of the Chinese Communists; on the contrary it made the ideological alienation of the CPC from the Kuomintang leaders which Voitinsky mentioned even more pronounced. The Communists' active participation in the work of the

Kuomintang, their penetration into the central and peripheral Kuomintang apparatus naturally encountered strong resistance on the part of the Kuomintang's reactionary elements representing the landlords and compradores and grouped on the party's right wing. Recovering somewhat from their heavy defeat at the First Congress of the Kuomintang, the rightists headed by Sun Yat-sen's son Sun Fo began to clamour about "red danger" and launched a frenzied campaign against the CPC and the Soviet Union's policy in China. M. M. Borodin reported that a great ideological confusion reigned in the Kuomintang whose members were worried most of all about their relations with the CPC which, they claimed, had weakened the party.

Such was the situation when the CC CPC held its plenary meeting (May 10-15, 1924) at which G. N. Voitinsky was present.

The meeting adopted a Resolution on the Work of the Communists in the Kuomintang which recognised that after the Kuomintang had been brought to organisational and political completion it became even more difficult for the Communists "to preserve the element of class struggle in the general national revolutionary movement".¹ In effect it admitted the existence of a right-wing deviation in the CPC that could lead to its dissolution in the Kuomintang. The plenary meeting condemned this right-wing deviation (without calling it such), and in its resolution stressed that the Kuomintang could not be a united party because of its class heterogeneity. Noting that two opposing forces — the reactionary right wing and the left wing consisting of Sun Yat-sen's group — had already emerged in the Kuomintang, the meeting said that a struggle between them was inevitable and that in effect "it is a struggle between us and the right wing of the Kuomintang".² The Party's tactic in this struggle was to be as follows: "If we manage to achieve freedom of criticism in the Kuomintang then we shall be able to prove that the policy of the right-wingers on the basic issues of the national movement is incorrect.... At the same time we should do everything possible to strengthen the left wing of the Kuomintang both ideologically

¹ *Tangpao*, May 20, 1924, No. 3.

² *Ibid.*

and organisationally.”¹ The plenary meeting maintained that the left wing of the Kuomintang could be strengthened in the first place through strengthening the CPC and extension of its mass basis by setting up class proletarian organisations independent of the Kuomintang, and also by getting the Kuomintang to meet the vital needs of the working class and the peasantry, particularly by easing the tax burden on the peasants and arming them in Kwantung. In a special resolution on the trade union movement the meeting demanded the establishment of what it called “purely class, militant trade unions” of the advanced contingents of the Chinese proletariat—railwaymen and miners—and warned: “We must not help the Kuomintang organisationally to penetrate the ranks of the industrial proletariat, for that would be a gross mistake.”² At the same time the plenary meeting considered it possible to help the Kuomintang to organise trade unions of artisans and shop-assistants. It also suggested that the Party “should move its members into the working sections of the Kuomintang and through them influence the development of the class struggle and the formation of a general labour front”.³ It condemned excessive concentration on organisational work in the Kuomintang and the desire of individual Party branches to confine their activity to promoting the numerical growth of the Kuomintang. It set the Party the task of “compelling the Kuomintang to conduct a planned and systematic propaganda of the principles set forth in the Manifesto [of the First Congress of the Kuomintang—V. G.], against foreign imperialism and native militarism, and for the country’s democratisation”. It is therefore necessary, said the resolution, “to work to become the real leaders of the Kuomintang’s propaganda departments”.⁴

Thus the May plenary meeting of the CC CPC condemned both rightist deviation which could result in the Party’s dissolution in the Kuomintang, and leftist demands for a break with it, and adopted a decision which in the main coincided with the Comintern’s line, namely, active partic-

¹ *Tangpao*, May 20, 1924, No. 3.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

ipation of the Communists in the Kuomintang and the latter’s transformation into a mass people’s revolutionary party as an organisational form of a united front in which the CPC would unconditionally retain its independence.

Nevertheless, shortly after the plenary meeting and in spite of its decisions, the very same leftist-sectarian tendencies which were overcome with the help of the Comintern in 1922 and 1923 and which made themselves felt once again at the May plenary meeting itself, gained the upper hand in the CPC leadership.

LEFT-SECTARIAN ELEMENTS IN THE CPC AGAINST THE COMINTERN’S TACTICAL LINE

The CPC leadership’s opposition to the tactical line of the Comintern in the question of relations with the Kuomintang resulted from a sharp deterioration of the political situation at the Kwantung revolutionary base and the increased activity of reactionary forces inside and outside the Kuomintang. The political crisis that was maturing in Kwantung for several months culminated in the so-called Paper Tiger Mutiny. Organised by the British imperialists this armed uprising of the compradore bourgeoisie against Sun Yat-sen’s government was indirectly supported by right-wing Kuomintang members and part of the units of the warlords who were Sun Yat-sen’s “allies”. Throughout the crisis the Kuomintang government of Sun Yat-sen adhered to a contradictory, indecisive position that was far from revolutionary. It was only the overt military action of the counter-revolutionary forces which threatened the very existence of Sun Yat-sen’s government, that the latter took determined measures against the mutineers and invoked the assistance of workers’ fighting squads and peasant self-defence detachments.

Contemporary Chinese historians, however, usually cleanse Sun Yat-sen’s stand of his inherent contradictions, and at the same time portray the course of events in Kwantung in 1924 as a consistent deployment of the revolutionary forces of the working class and the peasantry which ended in the complete rout of the counter-revolution under the leader-

ship of the CPC. There is considerable information that refutes this version. In an article entitled "The Situation in the South of China and Sun Yat-sen's Government",¹ written at the end of June 1924 after an on-the-spot inspection of events, G. N. Voitinsky noted: "The leading body of the Kuomintang Party is neither possessed of a strong desire nor has the experience to base the movement on the interests of the working sections of the population."² He went on to say that as a result the working people were displaying increasing discontent with the government and suspicion of its individual members".³ Voitinsky described the situation in Canton as "dangerous" and qualified Sun Yat-sen's attitude to the political machinations of the compradores and right-wing Kuomintang members as "impermissible negligence" and "criminal inactivity".⁴

Under the impact of the political events in Canton the right-wingers in the Kuomintang intensified their attacks on the CPC, and the entire leadership of the Kuomintang was in the grip of anti-communist feelings, although the left-wingers favoured more flexible tactics in the struggle against the Communists. Giving in to pressure from the right wing even Sun Yat-sen swayed to anti-communist positions. "As regards the attitude to the Communists," M. M. Borodin wrote on July 15, 1924, "there is a certain drawing together of the right and the left, including Sun, in the Kuomintang. With a few exceptions all of them would have begun a struggle against the Communists if they did not fear that it would lead to the complete isolation of their party. Only this fear forces the so-called leftists to restrain the rightists from taking determined measures against the Communists."

What policy towards the Kuomintang did the Comintern and the CPC adopt under these circumstances?

The Comintern's point of view concerning the relations between the Communists and the Kuomintang in the period

¹ See: *The Communist International*, 1924, No. 7(36), pp. 187-206 (in Russian). G. N. Voitinsky's articles published by this journal in the period between 1924 and 1926 reflected the Comintern's point of view.

² *Ibid.*, p. 189.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

under review was expounded in the above-mentioned article by G. N. Voitinsky. Its basic points coincided with the preceding proposals of the ECCI on the Chinese question so that there is every reason to believe that the Comintern's position remained unchanged on the whole.

Voitinsky went directly to the heart of the problem which in the final analysis would determine the future of the relations between the CPC and the Kuomintang: "Can the Kuomintang Party with its traditions of fighting for national independence yet, owing to the social composition of its membership, partly siding with the big bourgeoisie and the landowners, finally break away from this stratum, come against it as well as against the imperialists and begin promptly to orientate itself on the toiling sections of the people, that is the question upon which the future of the national revolutionary movement in China chiefly depends at present."¹ The author replies in the affirmative although, as we know, he was fully aware of all the weaknesses, errors and defects of the Kuomintang. "One thing is clear: the members of the Kuomintang want to fight against foreign oppression, against the imperialists and their henchmen—the Northern warlords. But so far they lack the determination and courage to modify their policy to meet the interests of the working masses. The historical task facing the Chinese Communists who are working with the Kuomintang is to organise workers and peasants and the young Chinese intelligentsia and by means of daily propaganda and other activities conducted through these organisations force the Kuomintang to steer their policy against the wealthy merchants and feudal landlords and towards China's working masses, towards the Soviet republics and against world imperialism."² The author believed that the Communists could solve this task inasmuch as the objective requirements of the revolutionary movement in China pushed the Kuomintang in the needed direction. Thus he had no doubt that the Kuomintang remained a revolutionary party and that the Communists should continue to work with it. He did not even hint that the CPC should alter the forms of its co-operation with the Kuomintang, and

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-91.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

this could signify only one thing, namely that the Communists should remain in the Kuomintang and influence it both from the inside and outside.

As regards M. M. Borodin's stand on the conflict between the Kuomintang and the CPC, it coincided with that of Voitinsky's. Being Sun Yat-sen's adviser and consequently active in the Kuomintang's leading bodies, Borodin was naturally well-informed about the anti-communist machinations of the right-wingers. Nevertheless, he did not think that the Communists in the Kuomintang were facing a situation when they had to prepare for a possible break, as some were inclined to believe, because "the Kuomintang's grass roots have created no obstacles in the way of the Communists".

Such was the stand of the Comintern's representatives towards the Kuomintang in the summer of 1924. But the majority of the leadership of the CC CPC adopted a totally different view. At the time the correlation of forces in the Central Committee was as follows: of the nine members elected at the Third Congress of the CPC only five — Chen Tu-hsiu (General Secretary of the CC), Tsai Ho-shen (editor of the organ of the CC, the *Hsiangtao* journal), Li Ta-chao, Mao Tse-tung (CC Secretary) and Tan Ping-shan — actively performed their leading functions. Three of them, Chen Tu-hsiu, Tsai Ho-shen and Mao Tse-tung favoured a break with the Kuomintang. The most active role in this group was played by Tsai Ho-shen who at the Third Congress of the CPC voted against the entry of the Communists into the Kuomintang. Tan Ping-shan, stationed in Canton, supported M. M. Borodin; Li Ta-chao was in Moscow for the Fifth Congress of the Comintern and took no part in this conflict. The Comintern's representative was supported by Chu Chiu-po, editor of the CPC Central Committee's theoretical journal *Hsin-chingnien*. The entire Canton organisation of the CPC opposed the leadership of the Central Committee.

On July 13, 1924, Chen Tu-hsiu sent a letter to Voitinsky concerning relations with the Kuomintang. In it he demanded that the Comintern formulate a "new policy" towards the Kuomintang. Assessing the Kuomintang as an indiscriminately reactionary mass he proposed that the Co-

mintern should modify its policy towards it along the following lines: "In our opinion all support in its present form should be terminated. It is also necessary that we should have a choice. This means that we should not support the Kuomintang unconditionally and unlimitedly, but that we should support only those individual spheres of its activity which are controlled by the leftists, for otherwise we shall be supporting our opponents". Let us leave aside the reference to the line of supporting the Kuomintang "unconditionally and unlimitedly" which was entirely mythical and evidently constituted a veiled attack against M. M. Borodin, and look into the substance of Chen Tu-hsiu's proposals. Chen Tu-hsiu knew that his proposals clashed with the Comintern's line and therefore formulated them in vague terms. When translated into normal language they could mean only a demand to withdraw from the Kuomintang and cease to co-operate with it.

A week later, on July 21, 1924, the CC CPC without waiting for a reply from the Comintern dispatched a secret Circular No. 15 to all Party branches instructing them to prepare organisationally for a break with the Kuomintang. The circular was signed by Chen Tu-hsiu and Mao Tse-tung.

The CC CPC continued to work for the withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang during the latter half of 1924. This was also reflected in Chen Tu-hsiu's letters to G. N. Voitinsky of September 7, and October 10, 1924.

In his letter of October 10 Chen Tu-hsiu, as far as we know, for the first time openly expressed his disagreement with the Comintern's policy on the question of the armed struggle and the revolutionary bases in China. "The Party maintains that if the Kuomintang does not cease military operations and does not quit the Kwantung government, then, objectively speaking, its turn from right to left and a rapprochement with the masses will be impossible. Therefore we think that the Kuomintang should terminate its military operations (including the Northern March) and withdraw from the Kwantung government."

Other CPC leaders, evidently the majority of the Central Committee at the time, shared Chen Tu-hsiu's views. The above letter was only an excerpt from a resolution adopted

by a plenary meeting of the CC CPC on Chu Chiu-po's report concerning the Party's line in Kwantung Province. Condemning the position of Chu Chiu-po and M. M. Borodin, the CC CPC noted in its resolution that "the assistance of the Comintern's representative [Borodin—V. G.] to the Kuomintang in its military policy in effect augments the reactionary strength of the rightists. The Executive Committee [i.e., the CC CPC — V. G.] believes that comrade Borodin has committed a series of mistakes when he overestimated the significance of the Kuomintang centre and entered into a compromise with it, and in carrying through the Kuomintang policy from top to bottom. He made a particularly grave mistake by supporting the Kuomintang's military activity." Since the Kuomintang was "full of reactionary right-wing elements and had a vacillating centre" and there were almost no revolutionaries in the army either, the Kuomintang "is absolutely incapable of revolutionary military operations. If in such a period we assisted the Kuomintang's military operations, then objectively speaking, we would have strengthened the reactionary trends in the Kuomintang and weakened the propaganda of national revolution."

A month later the CC CPC requested M. M. Borodin to withdraw support from the Whampoa Military Academy as it had become a nest of right-wing elements. This was the opinion of the CC CPC on the military question. A similar stand was adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League which opposed the Northern March that was being planned by Sun Yat-sen. "By undertaking this march, he [Sun Yat-sen—V. G.] would have aided only the Japanese militarists and Chang Tso-lin. There is no sense in this march for the national revolution. Workers and peasants should not participate in such a struggle."

Thus, in 1924 the CC CPC headed by Chen Tu-hsiu opposed the Comintern line from "leftist" positions. The principal features of this left deviation were:

a) the evaluation of the Kuomintang as a party which has lost its revolutionary significance because of the evident predominance of the right-wing reactionaries in it;

b) the demand that the Communists should withdraw from the Kuomintang;

c) the demand to terminate all support for the Kuomintang's military operations and withdraw the revolutionary authority and the revolutionary base from Kwantung.

Instead, it proposed that revolutionary work should be launched in China in line with the "classical" pattern: agitation organisation — armed uprising. This "leftist" course was widely advertised beginning with the latter half of 1924 in the organ of the CC CPC, the *Hsiangtao* journal, although no direct mention of the demand for a break with the Kuomintang appeared in the public press.

THE QUESTION OF THE HEGEMONY OF THE PROLETARIAT AT THE FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE CPC

The "left"-wing deviation which manifested itself with fresh force in the CPC leadership in the latter half of 1924 made itself felt in the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the CPC which met in January 1925. An important role in the preparations for and the convocation of this Congress was played by G. N. Voitinsky.

On December 19, 1924, in the course of the preparations, the Comintern's representative wrote in a letter to Petrov that the Congress would centre on the "question of the party's penetration into the masses of urban workers, that is, the question of transition from propaganda in small circles to agitation at factories and mills"; the Congress would have to find "forms of rallying and organising the masses". In order not to divert the Congress's attention from this central issue, G. N. Voitinsky suggested that no emphasis be made on the relations with the Kuomintang and that only certain corrections be introduced into the existing decisions on this score. "Though it is impossible to view the relations between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang as good," he went on to say, "we shall not raise this problem in all its magnitude. I believe that we still should continue to help the Kuomintang in order to whip up a broader wave of the anti-imperialist movement which should simultaneously be a movement against the politically feudal forms of the country's government. But we should modify our role in the national liberation move-

ment after the rout of the Chihli military party. This should find its expression, above all in greater penetration into the masses of workers and peasants, in a broader exposure of the Kuomintang's inclination to compromise with the warlords, and in a more overt struggle against the right wing of the Kuomintang whose representatives have recently been openly siding with the imperialists against the interests of the Chinese people. These are the main questions which will be taken up at the Congress."

G. N. Voitinsky's letter was brought to the knowledge of Stalin, Kuusinen and other leaders of the Comintern, and as far as it is known, his proposals met with no objections on their part. The most important proposal it contained, in our opinion, was to "modify" the role of the CPC in the revolutionary movement. What Voitinsky had in mind was disclosed in the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the CPC and in Voitinsky's articles which appeared subsequently in the press. The Congress also condemned "left"-wing and right-wing deviations in the activity of the united front and reaffirmed that the CPC had to co-operate with the Kuomintang, while preserving the political and organisational independence of the Communists. Nevertheless, "leftist" sentiments prevailed at the Congress.

In a number of his pre-Congress statements Chen Tu-hsiu repudiated the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolutionary essence of the Chinese national bourgeoisie as a class. In an article entitled "Twenty-Seven Years of the National Movement. Its Lessons" published in the *Hsin-chingnien*, the theoretical organ of the CC CPC, he wrote that "foreign imperialists and Chinese warlords, officials and traders form a united counter-revolutionary front". Continuing he said: "The general lesson which we should derive from the 20-odd years of the national movement consists in the following: of all the classes of society only the last class in the history of mankind, the proletariat, is the most consistent revolutionary class, a natural antagonist of international capitalism and imperialism. It is the main motive force not only of the social revolutions in the capitalist and imperialist states; it should also become the hegemon of the national revolutions occurring in states oppressed by capitalism and imperialism, influencing all its conciliatory

allies — the peasantry, artisans, the revolutionary intelligentsia, the lumpen proletariat (soldiers and bandits) and petty traders — and waging an uncompromising offensive against the foreign imperialists and their acolytes — local warlords, officials, wealthy traders, despotic feudal lords, wealthy landowners and the counter-revolutionary intelligentsia. This is the only way of attaining the ultimate objective of the national revolution — national liberation."¹

Thus, he did not regard the bourgeoisie, either in its entirety or its separate groups, as an ally of the proletariat in the national revolution. Indicative of Chen Tu-hsiu's attitude was that he qualified all major "national movements" which took place in China in the preceding quarter of a century — the movement for reforms, the movement of the I Ho Chuans (Boxers), the Hsinghai revolution and the May 4th Movement — as "petty-bourgeois national movements".² In this way it is impressed upon the reader that the bourgeoisie had never taken part and was not taking part in the revolutionary movement.

The qualification of all revolutionary democratic groups in China, particularly the Kuomintang, as petty-bourgeois was one of the most stable political and theoretical clichés used by the CPC in the first years of its existence.

This kind of qualification (although an indirect one) was given in the first "Statement of the CPC on the Situation in the Country" (June 15, 1922) and in the "Declaration of the Second Congress of the CPC".

The most typical feature of the resolutions of the Fourth Congress was a broad presentation of the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in the national revolution. It did not treat the hegemony of the proletariat as a statement of fact (at the time even the most leftist elements in the Party could not assert this): but as a claim to hegemony and not theoretically, but as a political directive to be carried out in the immediate future, as slogan of action. "The national revolutionary movement in China can be victorious only if the most revolutionary class, the proletariat, actively participates in it and assumes leadership," said the resolu-

¹ *Hsin-chingnien*, 1924, No. 4, p. 22.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

tion on the national revolutionary movement.¹ The Congress drew up its other decisions, especially concerning the trade union movement, in the light of the factual realisation of this general political directive.

On the basis of a class analysis of the Chinese society and the events of 1924 in Kwantung, the Congress drew up the following "general formula" of the Chinese revolution: "On one side there are the imperialists, warlords, landowners and compradores, and on the other, there are the workers, peasants and progressive students. This antagonistic formula has manifested itself with particular force in the struggle against merchant squads, and, it can be said, it is the general formula of the national revolutionary movement in China." Continuing the Congress said: "This movement involves workers, peasants, students and middle and small traders and professionals, while the big commercial compradore bourgeoisie and the industrial bourgeoisie confine themselves to requesting the government of the warlords for admission to the National Assembly and does not want to co-operate with the lower classes and participate in this movement. They and the warlords have already sensed that the lower classes, especially the proletariat, are a threat to their interests, and therefore are looking for ways of bridling them. Consequently, the actual scope of the national democratic movement depends on the mass participation of workers, peasants and the urban petty and middle bourgeoisie."²

It is clear from the above that the Fourth Congress defined the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty and middle bourgeoisie as the motive forces of the Chinese revolution, the imperialists, warlords and wealthy commercial (compradore) bourgeoisie, the big industrial bourgeoisie and big landowners as the counter-revolutionary forces, and the small landowners as a force which could take part in the revolution.

It was in accordance with this class analysis that the Congress assessed the alignment of forces in the Kuomintang. Without denying the participation of the middle bour-

¹ *Resolutions and Declarations of the Fourth All-China Congress of the CPC*, 1925, p. 20 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

geoisie in the revolution, the decisions of the Congress were on the whole markedly anti-bourgeois and this fact enabled leftist elements in the CPC leadership to interpret them in a manifestly sectarian manner.

It is easy to trace the basic tendency by looking through the complete set of the *Hsiangtao* journal from January through May 1925: repudiation of the revolutionary potential of the bourgeoisie (with various nuances), sectarian interpretation of the hegemony of the proletariat alongside sharp criticism of the indecisive, conciliatory policy of the Canton Kuomintang administration. For instance the authors of the main articles published in the February 7, 1925 issue of *Hsiangtao*, devoted to the second anniversary of the Peking-Hankow railwaymen's strike, Tsai Ho-shen, Peng Shu-chih, Chen Tu-hsiu and Chu Chiu-po, all members of the CC CPC, unanimously proclaimed the need to achieve the "hegemony of the proletariat as the basic lesson" to be drawn from the events of February 7, 1923, although those events had no bearing whatever to the problem of hegemony. In a reference to the role played by the bourgeoisie, Chen Tu-hsiu wrote: "Among the bourgeoisie there are counter-revolutionaries who are helping the imperialists and warlords, non-revolutionary neutral elements and also conciliators who have accidentally sided with the revolution." It follows that in the political respect he divided the bourgeoisie into three groups — counter-revolutionary, non-revolutionary and chance fellow-travellers of the revolution—and by doing so regarded the bourgeoisie on the whole as being incapable of participating in the revolution.¹

In an issue of the journal dedicated to the memory of Sun Yat-sen (March 21, 1925) the CPC Central Committee and its members Tsai Ho-shen and Chen Tu-hsiu once again included only the workers, peasants and the patriotic intelligentsia into the revolutionary camp which the renovated Kuomintang was to lead; no mention was made of the bourgeoisie as an ally of the revolutionary forces.² The same applies to the Address of the CPC Central Committee

¹ Chen Tu-hsiu, "The Forces of the Workers in the National Liberation Movement in China", *Hsiangtao*, No. 101, p. 845.

² *Hsiangtao*, No. 107, pp. 889, 895.

to the Second All-China Congress of Trade Unions (April 26, 1925).¹

Thus, the pattern of the class forces in the Chinese revolution drawn up at the Fourth Congress of the CPC was modified and given a more "leftist" interpretation by the CPC Central Committee in February-May 1925. And there were no perceptible differences between the CC CPC members who wrote in the *Hsiangtao* on this issue (Chen Tu-hsiu, Tsai Ho-shen, Peng Shu-chih and Chu Chiu-po).

As regards the future of the Kuomintang after Sun Yat-sen's death, the CC CPC, in keeping with the general concept of class struggle in China, advocated that the Kuomintang should be purged of right-wing bourgeois elements; it urged the consolidation of the party's left wing made up of workers and peasants and the Kuomintang's eventual transformation "into a party representing only the interests of the working people", "into a genuine political party of the workers and peasants".²

Such was the CPC's assessment of the alignment of class forces in China on the eve of the May 30 Movement, 1925 which inaugurated the national revolution of 1925-27. The further course of events showed, that this assessment was far very removed from the actual state of affairs.

As we have already said the implementation of the tactic of a united national anti-imperialist front in China formulated by the Comintern came up against the stubborn resistance of left-sectarian elements in the CPC, including opposition by Chen Tu-hsiu. At first it was expressed in the unwillingness of the Chinese Communists to follow the Comintern's recommendation and join the Kuomintang, and later, when they did join it after all, in persistent attempts which began in the middle of 1924 to withdraw from the Kuomintang. Chen Tu-hsiu showered the ECCI with demands to approve a Communist break with the Kuomintang, but the ECCI and its representatives in China rejected the attempts to disrupt the united front with the Kuomintang. Yet this pressure exerted by CPC left-sectarian elements

¹ *The Working-Class Movement in China, 1924-1927*, Moscow, 1967, p. 82 (in Russian).

of Sun Yat-sen", *Hsiangtao*, No. 115, pp. 1061-62.

² Hsiao Mo, "The Prospects for the Kuomintang after the Death of Sun Yat-sen", *Hsiangtao*, No. 115, pp. 1061-62.

on the Comintern evidently had its effect and stimulated a search for a more convincing theoretical argument in support of preserving such a form of co-operation between the CPC and the Kuomintang.

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE AND THE CHARACTER OF THE KUOMINTANG

We shall have a clearer picture of how the opinion of the role played by the national bourgeoisie in China formed, if we examine the concrete position of ECCI representatives towards the Kuomintang in the first months of 1925.

The aggravation of the internal struggle in the Kuomintang which took place at the end of 1924-beginning of 1925, partly due to the illness and then the death of Sun Yat-sen, led the Comintern's representatives in China to the conclusion that a split in the Kuomintang was both inevitable and imminent. The split was regarded as desirable and necessary for the party to be purged of right-wing elements and to acquire a more consistent revolutionary character. It was visualised as the withdrawal or expulsion of the rightists from the Kuomintang, with the positions and strength of its left wing consolidated, and the Communists uniting with the left Kuomintang on the platform of its First Congress.

In a report from Peking dated February 14, 1925, M. M. Borodin wrote that Sun Yat-sen's illness evoked a "great discussion" in the Kuomintang about the future of the party. This discussion "which is conducted with great heat and fury shows that there is hardly any chance of averting a split in the Kuomintang".

Borodin believed that it was possible to make certain tactical concessions in the struggle against the efforts of the right-wing elements to wreck the Kuomintang's organisational mainstays. He even considered that the Communists could quit the Kuomintang's leading organs, but adopted a very firm stand on the main, organisational, issue. "To make concessions in this question," he wrote, "would be tantamount to destroying the Kuomintang as an organised leadership of the national movement. This is precisely what the rightists are trying to do. If they manage to wreck

the party's organisation they will have no reason to be afraid of Kuomintang principles. A split is inevitable here. We would have even been ready to make concessions to them in the question of Communists. Since, for example, the Communists' presence in the Central Committee or the Politbureau [of the Kuomintang — V. G.] is an eyesore to the rightists, we would have been prepared to recall them. We can do very well without the Communists in the central bodies. But we cannot and should not make any concessions in the question of preserving the Party as an organised and united leadership of the national liberation movement."

G. N. Voitinsky adopted an exactly the same attitude to a possible split of the Kuomintang. In a letter dated February 15, 1925 to the CC CPC, a day after Borodin had filed his report from Peking, Voitinsky wrote: "In the event of Sun's death you should draw up a Manifesto, and not only to the masses in general but also to the Central Committee of the Kuomintang, calling for cohesion on the platform adopted at the First Congress of the Kuomintang. Today we should steer the course of strengthening the Kuomintang left (centre) because the rightists are hastily and energetically organising, grouping round themselves anti-national elements outside the Kuomintang. The next plenary meeting of the Kuomintang may force us to break with the right wing. It is necessary to get ready for this."

Quite probably Borodin and Voitinsky had concerted their standpoint on a possible split of the Kuomintang and followed a single line on this issue.

Some six weeks later, that is, after the death of Sun Yat-sen, Borodin reaffirmed his opinion that a split of the Kuomintang would be desirable in the sense of purging it of right-wing elements, and suggested that this operation should be carried out as soon as possible.

After the split, he persuaded the ECCI, the balance of forces "will be in our favour", because "we are in control" of the work among the peasants, workers, students and in the army. "Thus it can be said," he observed, "that work along the entire front of the national liberation movement is and will remain in our hands." As regards the rightists, they were "absolutely incapable of any organised actions" because of the contradictions that beset them. Therefore

"there is no reason to believe that after withdrawing from the party they will unite on the basis of any activity, even against us". Events, however, showed that Borodin overestimated the actual strength of the left and, at the same time, underestimated the influence of the rightists and their capacity for determined counter-revolutionary actions.

Regarding the rightists as representatives of the bourgeoisie Borodin inevitably faced a cardinal general "problem of enormous importance", namely, formulating the basic attitude to the Chinese bourgeoisie as a class, that is, estimating its revolutionary (or counter-revolutionary) potential. In Borodin's opinion the Chinese bourgeoisie, which he did not differentiate, was a counter-revolutionary force. Yet he knew that his attitude to the bourgeoisie was at odds with the Comintern's policy of a united national anti-imperialist front in China. Therefore he did not think that he had the right to deal with the matter on his own and requested Moscow for directives. Here is how he presented the question to the Comintern's leadership: "So far the question of whether the moment has arrived when this bourgeoisie can regard imperialism less dangerous to its interests than the mounting class struggle of the workers, is still unclear to the centrists. I personally think that the Chinese bourgeoisie has been corrupted by its association with foreign capital, and that it is more an instrument of imperialism than what could become an instrument of national liberation. The Chinese bourgeoisie was conceived in the compradore system and so far it has not rid itself of this character. That is why the right-wing Kuomintang representing the interests of the Chinese bourgeoisie has always opposed our anti-imperialist line and the workers' class struggle. In this connection a problem of enormous importance presents itself: should we also steer a course of fighting against the Chinese bourgeoisie (this refers to the struggle of the Kuomintang and not the Communist Party of China, for which, of course, the question is clear), i.e., should we shatter the illusions of the centrists who hope that the Chinese bourgeoisie will support the national revolutionary movement? It is in this matter that we request directives." It is interesting to note that in Borodin's opin-

ion the CPC had solved this question for itself. We, however, know of no Comintern directives on this issue. As far as the Kuomintang was concerned, the question of the attitude to the bourgeoisie as Borodin presented it, could mean only a proposal radically to transform the class and political character of this party, which was a form of a united national anti-imperialist front in Chinese conditions. In March 1925 the ECCI could not give a positive reply to Borodin's request, because the Comintern had not yet reached a final decision on this matter. The needed explanation was forthcoming only in May 1925 in the form of J. V. Stalin's statements on the national and colonial questions (his speeches on May 9 and 18).

At the beginning of 1925, prior to Stalin's May speeches, any reference to the course of transforming the Kuomintang into a workers' and peasants' party as recommended by the Comintern may be connected only with the articles which appeared in the press, particularly in *The Communist International* and *Bolshevik* journals. We know of no direct official instructions from the Comintern on this issue. Chronologically this tendency can be traced in the press beginning approximately from March 1925, that is before and after the Enlarged Fifth Plenum of the ECCI. Prior to that the entire Chinese bourgeoisie, including the big bourgeoisie, was regarded as an ally of the revolution, as an anti-imperialist force. For instance on January 31, 1925 the *Bolshevik* published an article by B. Semyonov who noted that "the privileged status of the foreigners is being sharply opposed by the big Chinese bourgeoisie". He also wrote that "the big Chinese bourgeoisie was just as sharply discontented with Chinese militarism".¹

Beginning with March 1925 a different view of the role played by the Chinese bourgeoisie began to emerge. This change can be traced in a series of articles by Voitinsky (he returned to Moscow in March) published in March and April 1925. In an article dated March 7, 1925, he observed: "A purely bourgeois wing, socially connected with anti-na-

¹ B. Semyonov, "Events in China", *Bolshevik*, 1925, No. 2(18), p. 67 (in Russian).

tional elements is maturing in the Kuomintang."¹ In his opinion the rightists intended to turn the Kuomintang "into a purely bourgeois party".² Thus Voitinsky speaks about the withdrawal of part of the Chinese bourgeoisie from the revolutionary movement. In the Kuomintang this circumstance manifested itself in the heightened divisive activity of right-wing elements which he qualified as its "purely bourgeois wing". As regards the Kuomintang left he described them as chiefly representatives of the peasantry, which, of course, was an idealisation.

Voitinsky, who viewed the outcome of the struggle in the Kuomintang with less optimism than Borodin, warned that although numerically the right wing of the Kuomintang was "not large", it "could play a considerable role" in the struggle against the revolutionary movement, because if it did break away it would be joined by the whole of the reaction. Therefore he recommended circumspection and that the break with the rightists should at first take place in the "form of a withdrawal (or rather, expulsion)" of the more discredited individual right-wing functionaries. Expressing the hope that "by the forthcoming plenary meeting of the Kuomintang the leaders of the left wing would sooner part company with the Kuomintang right, than with the Communists", Voitinsky at the same time did not rule out that the CPC would have "to make certain concessions" to the leftists in order to neutralise the anti-communist agitation of the rightists.³ In his opinion the successful development of the Kuomintang lay in only one direction: the Kuomintang government should shift to the left and establish closer links with the masses by giving them broader political rights and protecting their economic interests.⁴ The task, as we can see, was couched in somewhat vague terms, but it was quite definite in substance—the Kuomintang had to be transformed into a party of the working people.

In his next article published on March 23, 1925 on the

¹ G. Voitinsky, "The Tendencies of the Revolutionary Movement in China and the Kuomintang", *The Communist International*, 1925, No. 3(40), pp. 154-55 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-58.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

occasion of the death of Sun Yat-sen Voitinsky wrote about the future of the Kuomintang in more definite terms. Noting that elements socially hostile to China's toiling population, which in the class sense were "elements of the Chinese bourgeoisie already aware of their class interests", were displaying a tendency of breaking away from the Kuomintang, he asserted that the Kuomintang "under the direct leadership of Sun Yat-sen was beginning to evolve in the direction of changing into a truly people's party" and that it "should become a mass people's party".¹ The perspective for the Kuomintang's development is clearly spelled out, although some details are still missing: a bourgeois wing breaks away from the Kuomintang and creates a conciliatory bourgeois party; the Kuomintang on its part, turns into a "mass people's party" which upholds the interests of the "urban working sections and the peasantry", and "the petty bourgeoisie and the urban poor", i.e., it turns into a petty-bourgeois party.

What strikes the eye in Voitinsky's report at the Fifth ECCI Plenum on March 25, 1925 and in his preceding articles is the total absence of any reference to the hegemony of the proletariat in China. Evidently the ECCI considered it premature to raise this question.

Particularly interesting in the light of Voitinsky's report at the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI was his last article in this series published on April 13, 1925. Its distinguishing feature was that in it he directly raised the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in China. "The idea of the hegemony of the proletariat in the general liberation struggle, not only in a relatively developed capitalist country such as India, but in China, too, is being moved into the forefront by the very course of events in these countries in the recent period."² What was most noteworthy in this article was not the idea itself of the hegemony of the proletariat in China, but the discussion of the form, the implementation of this hegemony.

Voitinsky vigorously opposed the slogan of a pure, "di-

¹ G. Voitinsky, "Sun Yat-sen and the Liberation Movement in China", *Bolshevik*, 1925, Nos. 5-6 (21-22), pp. 46, 52.

² G. Voitinsky, "The Colonial Question at the Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the ECCI", *The Communist International*, 1925, No. 4(41), pp. 64-65 (in Russian).

rect" hegemony of the proletariat in India and China, and counterposed it with a slogan of what might be called indirect hegemony exercised "through the medium of a national revolutionary party", as he put it. "The Communist Party of China, being a party of the industrial proletariat," he wrote, "will nevertheless exercise its hegemony of the proletariat not directly as in purely capitalist countries or even not in the way it was exercised in pre-revolutionary Russia, but through the medium of the national revolutionary party relying on the masses of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie and the radical intelligentsia."¹ The pattern is completed: a) departure of the Chinese bourgeoisie from the revolution, expressed in the withdrawal of bourgeois elements from the Kuomintang and their organisation into an independent conciliatory bourgeois party; b) transformation of the Kuomintang into a "people's democratic", "national revolutionary" party which the author now directly calls petty-bourgeois; c) the setting in this connection of the goal of attaining hegemony of the proletariat; d) the implementation of the hegemony of the proletariat not directly through the Communist Party, but through the Kuomintang, i.e., through a revolutionary petty-bourgeois party.

We have examined the Comintern's policy towards the Chinese bourgeoisie and the Kuomintang as it presented itself from the correspondence between ECCI representatives in China (Borodin and Voitinsky) and articles published in January-April 1925 in *The Communist International*, organ of the ECCI.

This analysis shows that prior to the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI in March and April 1925, the Comintern invariably drew up its recommendations for China on the basis of the general fundamental principles set down in the decisions of the Second and Fourth congresses of the Comintern on the national and colonial question. In the spring of 1925 after the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI the theoretical arguments supporting the Comintern's line in the Chinese question were modified somewhat, but no important changes were made in the line itself. This was due to J. V. Stalin's first public statements on the Chinese question.

¹ *Ibid.*

* * *

Stalin wrote his works on the Chinese revolution when an acute struggle against the Trotskyite opposition was going on, and they either bear an imprint of this struggle or are aimed directly at the Trotskyites who used the Chinese question, particularly in 1927, to attack the Party's line in general. In that period the CPSU and the Comintern had already proved the fallacy of the general line of the Trotskyite opposition in the Chinese question and this was subsequently confirmed by the trend of events in China. The correctness of a range of fundamental propositions advanced by Stalin in the polemic on the Chinese question was also confirmed. At the same time, some of the statements contained in his speeches on the national liberation struggle in 1925 showed that he underestimated the progressive potentialities of the national bourgeoisie in the Eastern countries. In 1923 and 1924 Stalin reconsidered some of the principles of the international communist movement which had been worked out by the Comintern (at its First, Second, Third and Fourth congresses, about the attitude to the intermediate social strata and their political trends both in the West and the East). In 1924 he formulated the "basic strategic rule", which in particular referred to "the compromising parties, as the most dangerous groupings in the period of the outbreak of the revolution".¹ The implementation of this premise did not produce the desired results because there was no approaching "revolutionary outbreak" either in the West or in the East, at that time. The Fifth Congress of the Comintern, held in June-July 1924, after a heated discussion of Zinoviev's report adopted "Theses on Tactics". This document portrayed the tactics of united front merely as a method of agitation and revolutionary mobilisation of the masses, and interpreted the slogan of a worker and peasant government which the Comintern had put forward a year earlier, as a synonym of a dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus, it ruled out all intermediate stages on the way to a socialist revolution.²

¹ J. V. Stalin, "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists", *Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1953, p. 401.

² *International Press Correspondence*, 1924, No. 41, pp. 403-405.

Naturally enough these new instructions also influenced the Comintern's tactics in the national and colonial questions. There was a detailed discussion of the issue on the basis of Manuisky's report in the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions of the Congress and at its plenary sittings.¹ But the Congress could not approve the detailed resolution drawn up by the Commission on the National and Eastern Questions because the draft said nothing about the need politically to defeat the conciliatory national bourgeoisie. Consequently the decisions on the national and colonial questions adopted at the Second and the Fourth congresses of the Comintern, formally remained in force. A new instruction regarding the role of the national bourgeoisie was approved by the Comintern only four years later, at its Sixth Congress in 1928. But inasmuch as doubt had been cast on the main political guideline of the Fourth Congress concerning a united anti-imperialist front with the participation of the bourgeoisie, the working bodies of the Comintern and the Communist parties of the Eastern countries were in a way left without a definite tactical guideline for a long period of time.

Initially the fresh appeal to "defeat" the national bourgeoisie failed to win sufficiently wide support in the Comintern, as can be judged from the fact that the Resolution of the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI (March-April 1925) on the Indian Question was drawn up essentially in the spirit of the decisions of the Fourth Congress. In connection with the decisions of the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI on the colonial question, and particularly its resolution on India,² Stalin expounded his views on the problems of the national liberation movement. He did this a month later in a report on the results of the 16th Party Conference to the activists of the Moscow organisation of the CPSU on May 9, 1925, and in his speech "The Political Tasks of the University of

¹ *Ibid.*, No. 50, pp. 518-27; No. 54, pp. 569-74.

² The Plenum did not discuss the Chinese question as a separate item on its agenda. The Colonial Commission of the Plenum merely heard a report of its member G. N. Voitinsky on the situation in China in which he suggested that the Commission should confine itself to approving the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the CPC which took place a few weeks earlier, in January 1925.

the Peoples of the East" at a meeting of the students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East on May 18, 1925 on the occasion of its fourth anniversary.

Stalin presented his views most clearly in that section of his speech on May 18 which dealt with communist tactics in the three categories of countries, including China, which he had designated. In a reference to the Comintern's tactics in China, Stalin said: "In countries like Egypt and China, where the national bourgeoisie has already split up into revolutionary party and a compromising party, but where the compromising section of the bourgeoisie is not yet able to join up with imperialism, the Communists can no longer set themselves the aim of forming a united national front against imperialism. In such countries the Communists must pass from the policy of a united national front to the policy of a revolutionary bloc of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie."¹ Thus, the tactics of a united national anti-imperialist front was proclaimed obsolescent for China.

Advising the CPC to shift from the policy of a united national front to the policy of a revolutionary bloc of workers and the petty bourgeoisie, Stalin correspondingly interpreted the character of the Kuomintang as a form of such a bloc. Here is how he described the character of the Kuomintang in his speech on May 18, 1925: "In such countries that bloc can assume the form of a single party, a workers' and peasants' party, provided, however, that this distinctive party *actually* represents a bloc of two forces—the Communist Party and the party of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie."²

Here the Kuomintang is estimated from two standpoints. As an independent political entity it is characterised as a "party of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie", and as a form of a bloc of workers and the petty bourgeoisie it is presented as a "workers' and peasants' party. The Kuomintang would acquire this "workers' and peasants'" nature by forming a bloc and uniting in a single political organisation ("a dual party") of two independent parties—the proletarian (Communist) and the petty-bourgeois (Kuo-

¹ J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 7, p. 149.

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

mintang). Later, in 1927, Stalin explained, however, that what he had in mind in 1925 "was not the present, but the *future* of people's revolutionary parties in general, and of the Kuomintang in particular".¹ From the point of view of grammar the question of the Kuomintang was expounded in the future tense. In effect, however, this speech came to be regarded as a practical directive and was applied as such, which is reflected in some of the Comintern's documents concerning China.

One of these documents, for example, was the Resolution on the Chinese Question adopted by the Sixth Plenum of the ECCI in March 1926. It qualified the Kuomintang as follows: "The Kuomintang Party, whose principal group entered into an alliance with the Chinese Communists, represents a revolutionary bloc of the workers, peasants, intellectuals and urban democracy [i.e., the urban petty bourgeoisie — V. G.] ... Various strata of the Chinese big bourgeoisie which temporarily had been grouped around the Kuomintang Party, have broken away during the last year".² Thus the Kuomintang was characterised as a party of the bloc of workers and petty-bourgeois sections. It is easy to see that in this case the problem was interpreted fully in line with Stalin's formula, and not from the point of view of the future, but from the point of view of the actual state of affairs.

As a bloc of workers and peasants the Kuomintang's task was to intensify the struggle against imperialism and the Chinese national bourgeoisie. "The tasks of this bloc are to expose the half-heartedness and inconsistency of the national bourgeoisie and to wage a determined struggle against imperialism."³

Who should play the leading role in this revolutionary bloc of workers and the petty bourgeoisie? The working class in the person of the Communist Party, of course. "Such a dual party is necessary and expedient, provided it

¹ J. V. Stalin, "Talk with the Students of the Sun Yat-sen University", *Works*, Vol. 9, p. 251.

² *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 6, No. 40, May 13, 1926, p. 648.

³ J. V. Stalin, "The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East", *Works*, Vol. 7, p. 149.

does not bind the Communist Party hand and foot, provided it does not restrict the freedom of the Communist Party to conduct agitation and propaganda work, provided it does not hinder the rallying of the proletarians around the Communist Party, and provided it facilitates the actual leadership of the revolutionary movement by the Communist Party. Such a dual party is unnecessary and inexpedient if it does not conform to all these conditions, for it can only lead to the communist elements becoming dissolved in the ranks of the bourgeoisie and, to Communist Party losing the proletarian army."¹ Dwelling on the subject of the factual guidance of the revolution by the Communist Party, Stalin at the same time did not raise directly the question of the hegemony of the proletariat for the second group of countries, i.e., for China. He set the small and young Communist Party which wielded little influence the task of assuming the factual leadership of the entire revolutionary movement but did not say that the working class had to assert its hegemony in the revolutionary movement. At the time the assertion of the hegemony of the proletariat was designated as a practical task only for the third group of countries, colonies such as India, which attained a high level of capitalist development. The discrepancy between these tasks was obvious, and constituted the contradictory nature of Stalin's tactical conclusions as applied to China. Just as contradictory were some other Comintern documents based on these tactical conclusions. The course of the revolutionary struggle compelled the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI to introduce partial changes into Stalin's conclusions.

Under the new conditions created by Chiang Kai-shek's coup in April 1927, Stalin returned to his 1925 conclusions concerning the role of the bourgeoisie, and on their basis formulated his evaluation of the "Wuhan stage" of the Chinese revolution. Further more, in his theses for propagandists "Questions of the Chinese Revolution" (April 21, 1927) which were approved by the CPSU Central Committee, he wrote that "in the first period of the Chinese Revolution", i.e., prior to April 12, 1927, the day of the coup, "the national bourgeoisie (not the compradors) sided with

¹ J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 149-50.

the revolution. It was the revolution of a united *all-national* front."¹ Stalin repeated this formula three months later in "Notes on Contemporary Themes" (July 28, 1927): "In the period of the first stage of the revolution, when it was a revolution of an all-national *united* front (the Canton period), the proletariat's allies were the peasantry, the urban poor, the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, and the national bourgeoisie".² This assessment had a new quality compared with the one given in his speech of May 18, 1925. Moreover, Stalin conceded that all these classes cooperated "within a single bourgeois-revolutionary organisation, called the Kuomintang".³ This meant that now he characterised the Kuomintang as a bourgeois and not a petty-bourgeois party. This meant that in his 1927 theses approved by the Central Committee of the CPSU, and in his later writings Stalin seriously modified his assessment of the Kuomintang Party which he had made in 1925. It should be borne in mind, however, that the acceptance of Stalin's 1925 formulas as a theoretical substantiation of the Comintern's policy in China by no means signified that it had altered this policy in practice. Before and after Stalin's speeches the Comintern in effect pursued in China a united anti-imperialist front policy with the participation of the national bourgeoisie, the only correct policy at the time. Stalin's statements introduced no serious practical changes in the Comintern's China policy.

Subsequent events in China showed that the class level of the movement, the significance of the plebeian-democratic and proletarian element in the Chinese revolution, the rate of its development, the transition from one stage to another and its weight in the general balance of the world proletarian revolution were unfoundedly overestimated. Consequently, the social and political processes actually occurring in China were interpreted to a certain extent one-sidedly. There were instances of wishful thinking and that was a reflection of the still unerased elements of subjectivism emanating from Stalin. Sometimes this left the Comintern insufficiently prepared for the sharp turn of events (the

¹ J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 9, p. 226.

² *Ibid.*, p. 346.

³ *Ibid.*

events of March 20, 1926 in Canton), which under different conditions and given a more correct assessment of the situation could have been anticipated, so that even if they could not have been averted it would have been possible to meet them fully prepared.

"The course of revolutionary events in China and other Eastern countries showed that Stalin's concept, which seemed to be a logical continuation of the 'basic strategic rule of Leninism', about the conciliatory nature of the national bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi-colonial countries, failed to justify itself in practice. Yet it would be incorrect to think that Stalin formulated this concept out of context of reality, including the political struggle in China. Things were more complicated. Actually his statements about the national bourgeoisie were an attempt to give a theoretical reply to the most urgent practical problems of the national liberation movement, which, in particular, were set by the leadership of the CPC and the Comintern's representatives in China. The materials of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, its Programme, O. V. Kuusinen's well-known statement, the documents of the international conferences of Communist and Workers' parties in 1957 and 1960, the Theses of the CPSU Central Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution and a number of other documents of the CPSU once and for all did away with the one-sided nature of the above concept set forth by Stalin and reflected in a number of important documents of the Comintern.

* * *

The attitude adopted by Trotsky and his supporters towards the Chinese question was characterised by extreme hypocrisy, duplicity and lack of principles, on the one hand, and astounding ignorance of the elementary factors of the Chinese reality, on the other. Indicative of this stand was that when things were well with the Chinese revolution, the Trotskyites usually kept silent, but raised an outcry as soon as the revolution encountered difficulties or suffered setbacks. But even then they seldom fully disclosed the political and class essence of their attitude to the Chinese question,

shrouding it in pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric. The reason is clear. The Chinese question as such was of no interest to the Trotskyites; it was only a reason and a pretext for attacking the line of the Party and the Comintern as a whole.

Prior to 1926 the Trotskyites did not oppose the Comintern's policy in China; we know nothing about any such activity taking place, and they, on their part, do not mention it. On the contrary, on the key issue of the Comintern's policy in China at the time, that of a united front with the Kuomintang, a problem which the Trotskyites turned into a central issue of their polemic in 1926 and 1927, they did not differ with the Comintern's line right up to Sixth Plenum of the ECCI (March 1926). Speaking on March 21, 1924 on the occasion of the third anniversary of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, Trotsky said, "We approve of the Communist support to the Kuomintang party in China."¹ At the same time he advanced the thesis about a "feverish industrialisation" of the East which was driving the colonies with "whirlwind rapidity" on to the path of revolution. On the basis of this thesis he drew the conclusion that "the centre of gravity of the revolutionary movement will be transferred to the East".² Trotsky's idea was promptly caught up by the Trotskyites and nationalist elements in the CPC, and his speech translated by Cheng Chao-lin was published in the CPC Central Committee's theoretical organ *Hsin-chingnien*.³ Exploiting Trotsky's idea Cheng Chao-lin shortly afterwards directly declared that China was turning into the centre of the world revolution. "If the centre of the world revolution is shifting and the ways of the world revolution are changing," he wrote in the *Hsiangtao* journal, "then where else can the centre of the world revolution and the ways of the world revolution be transferred if not to China... The Chinese revolution will unfailingly speed up the colossal explosion of the world revolution, terminate imperialism's long life, and the Chinese proletariat will be able to play the main role in the world

¹ Leon Trotsky, "Prospects and Tasks in the East", *International Press Correspondence*, 1924, Vol. 4, No. 31, p. 306.

² *Ibid.*, p. 307.

³ *Hsin-chingnien*, 1924, No. 4, pp. 83-91.

revolution."¹ Such nationalist sentiments became so widespread in the CPC towards the end of 1925, that they drew the attention of the Comintern and the speakers in the Chinese sub-commission of the Sixth Plenum of the ECCI had to rebuff the Messianic ideas emanating from China.

Zinoviev, who in 1926 and 1927 actively backed Trotsky's attacks on the Comintern's China policy likewise did not oppose this policy right up to the spring of 1926, and took part in its elaboration in his capacity of Chairman of the ECCI. He continued to support this policy at the Sixth Plenum of the ECCI, but his speech there contained Trotsky's thesis about "the world revolution changing its route".

Chiang Kai-shek's bloodless coup of March 20, 1926 in Canton provided the first pretext for the Trotskyite opposition to attack the Comintern's line in China. The Trotskyites wrongly assessed this event as a departure of the national bourgeoisie from the united front. Stemming from this profoundly false premise the Trotskyites, in the spring of 1926, began to attack the Comintern's China policy, concentrating mainly on the united front tactic. In their speeches at the meetings of the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee in April 1926, Trotsky and Zinoviev repeatedly demanded the withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang, i. e., the break up of the united front. The Trotskyites received a sharp rebuff at the joint plenary meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the CPSU in July 1926. It adopted a resolution which said in part: "3. Approving the work of the Politbureau and the CPSU delegation in the Chinese question, the Plenary Meeting of the CC states that the opposition (Zinoviev, Trotsky) has come forward with clearly opportunistic and, in some respects, directly defeatist proposals in this field: to recall comrade Karakhan, surrender the Chinese Eastern Railway, and withdraw from the Kuomintang. The CC believes that such a position would make sense only given the complete liquidation of the national revolutionary movement in China, i. e., full and lasting stabilisation of capitalism in this crucial sector of the colonial front of the class struggle. By no

¹ *Hsiangtao*, No. 128, p. 1182.

means ruling out broad freedom of manoeuvre the CC holds that under the given conditions the above proposals of the opposition are absolutely groundless and that taken together they constitute impermissible defeatism."

The stand of the CPSU was upheld by the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI (November-December 1926). It passed a resolution on the Chinese question which contained the following points: "14. The supreme necessity of influencing the peasantry also determines the relation of the Communist Party to the Kuomintang and the relation to the Canton Government. The apparatus of the National Revolutionary Government provides a very effective way to reach the peasantry. The Communist Party must use this way.

"In the newly liberated provinces state apparatuses of the type of the Canton Government will be set up. The task of the Communists and their revolutionary allies is to penetrate into the apparatus of the new government to give practical expression to the agrarian programme of national revolution. This will be done by using the State apparatus for the confiscation of land, reduction of taxes, investment of real power in the peasant committees, thus carrying on progressive measures of reform on the basis of a revolutionary programme.

"15. In view of this and many other equally important reasons the point of view that the Communist Party must leave the Kuomintang is incorrect. The whole process of development of the Chinese revolution, its character and its perspectives demand that the Communists must stay in the Kuomintang and intensify their work in it."¹

Their direct attacks on the policy of a united front in China producing no results, the Trotskyites undertook a round-about manoeuvre. To counteract the policy of a united front they came forward with the slogan of Soviets in China and tried very hard to impose it on the Comintern after Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal in April 1927. In an attempt to hide the adventurist essence of their slogans, they made a pretence of accepting the Comintern's assessment of the Chinese revolution and even the united front

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 7, No. 11, pp. 232-33.

policy. It was Trotsky himself who disclosed the falsity and hypocrisy of these statements when he later admitted that his "slogan of Soviets in China meant above all the break with the ... 'bloc of four classes' [i.e., with the united front—V. G.] and the withdrawal of the Communist Party from the Kuomintang".¹ The call for Soviets which the Trotskyites advanced long before the defeat of the revolution of 1925-27 was a logical result of the general Trotskyite concept of the Chinese revolution. Disregarding obvious facts the Trotskyites denied the bourgeois-democratic nature of the Chinese revolution and alleged that China was on the threshold of a "Chinese October" already in the 1920s. Therefore, unlike the Comintern, they interpreted the call for Soviets in China, as the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Trotskyite concept of the Chinese revolution was thoroughly criticised at the Seventh, Eight and Ninth plenums of the ECCI, at the plenary meetings of the CPSU Central Committee and in the Party press.

The struggle waged by the Comintern and the CPSU against the Trotskyites over questions of the Chinese revolution was of great significance for the CPC in overcoming diverse anti-Leninist, including Trotskyite, trends in its ranks.

The influence of Trotskyism began to make itself felt in the CPC as early as the 1920s and at times acquired an unexpected nationalistic colouring, as in the above statements of Cheng Chao-lin, and later in the concepts formulated by Li Li-san, Mao Tse-tung and others. Nor was it an accident that leading officials of the CPC such as Chen Tu-hsiu and Peng Shu-chih who had become infected with "left"-wing sectarianism went over to the Trotskyite camp at the end of the 1920s.

During the revolution of 1925-27 Trotskyite views in the CPC manifested themselves more fully in the concept of "natural hegemony" of the proletariat which was developed by Peng Shu-chih and backed by Chen Tu-hsiu,² and which received a resounding rebuff from Chinese Marxists,

¹ Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, New York, 1936, p. 205.

² See: *Hsin-chingnien*, 1924, No. 4.

especially from Chu Chiu-po.¹ But it is easy to trace repetitions of such views in Mao Tse-tung's later works and in the Maoist literature on the history of the Chinese revolution. It is also noteworthy that Mao Tse-tung and his supporters assumed what in effect was a conciliatory policy in the struggle against Trotskyism in the CPC: one rarely comes across condemnation of Trotskyism in Mao Tse-tung's works and even then it is no more than lip service to the existing party traditions. There is also nothing accidental in the fact that at the beginning of the anti-Japanese war the Maoist leadership of the CPC widely opening the Party's doors made an attempt to bring even the Trotskyites and their leader Chen Tu-hsiu into the fold of the "big party family".

By routing Trotskyism the CPSU and the Comintern in effect saved the CPC in the 1920s and 1930s from the Trotskyite danger, and furnished the Chinese Marxists enormous theoretical and practical assistance in unmasking and neutralising the Chinese brands of Trotskyism. The lessons of the Comintern's struggle against Trotskyism are just as topical today, when the Maoists are again attacking the international communist movement, sometimes from Trotskyite or semi-Trotskyite positions.

* * *

The revolutionary upsurge in China after the First World War developed into the anti-imperialist national revolution of 1925-27. Its manifestly national character accounted for its very broad composition. The principal motive forces were the national bourgeoisie, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the working class and the peasantry. At some of its stages the anti-imperialist movement was joined by certain sections of the landowners' class and even individual feudal warlords. The active participation of millions of the working class and the peasantry lent the national revolution of 1925-27 the features of a popular anti-imperialist revolution, particularly at its last stage.

¹ See: Chu Chiu-po, *Controversial Questions of the Chinese Revolution*, 1927 (in Russian).

Another distinctive feature of the revolutionary events in China in the 1920s was the mounting role played by the Chinese proletariat. Having first appeared on the arena of the political struggle during the May 4th Movement in 1919, the Chinese proletariat quickly rose to a position from which it could challenge the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Working-class actions were the most vivid events of the revolutionary struggle of that period (the Movement of May 30, 1925, the Hongkong-Canton strike of 1925-26, the uprising of the Shanghai proletariat in the spring of 1927, etc.). In these actions the proletariat manifested its supreme heroism and the enormous strength of its creative initiative and revolutionary enthusiasm. The principal leader and organiser of the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people was the Communist Party of China. But there was a considerable degree of spontaneity and fragmentation in the revolutionary activity of the working class in that period; the independent class organisations of the proletariat were unstable, frequently without grass roots and embraced only a relatively small section of the more politically conscious workers. The level of class awareness was low, although it kept rising all the time. The Communists who carried on active political and organisational work among the workers could not penetrate all the strata of the working class and the urban poor and organically link up with the proletarian and non-proletarian masses. The working class failed to take the helm of the revolution of 1925-27.

The 1925-27 revolution was led by the national bourgeoisie whose political mouthpiece was the national revolutionary Kuomintang Party. Aware of the weakness of the national bourgeoisie, the Kuomintang sought the support of the workers and peasants and at the same time also tried to rely on the patriotic and liberal-minded landlord circles, and particularly on the army officers. On the international scene the Kuomintang, while co-operating with the rivalling imperialist powers, sought assistance, especially material, from the Soviet Union, and endeavoured to establish organisational links with the Comintern. So long as the working-class and communist movement in China was too weak to threaten the mainstays of existing social order, the national bourgeoisie was prepared to co-operate with the Com-

munists within the framework of a united anti-imperialist front and even agreed to let them join the Kuomintang, in a certain sense temporarily sharing the leadership of the revolution with them but firmly holding command positions in its hands. When, however, the workers' and peasants' movement overstepped the limits fixed by the bourgeoisie, creating a situation in which the leadership of the revolution could pass into the proletariat's hands, the bourgeoisie and its allied landlord circles betrayed the cause of the national anti-imperialist revolution drowning it in the blood of Communists and hundreds of thousands of non-party workers and peasants. Once a national revolutionary party, the Kuomintang turned into one of the most reactionary bourgeois-landlord parties in the East. The Kuomintang's betrayal of the revolution shattered the bourgeois concept of China's liberation, a circumstance which facilitated the spread of Marxist ideas in the country.

For the CPC the 1920s were a period of its rise and consolidation as a political party of the Chinese proletariat. At first the CPC traversed a difficult road of trial and error, of comprehending Chinese reality in the light of the Marxist-Leninist theory, a process accompanied by "left"- and right-wing opportunistic vacillations mainly characterised by manifestation of sectarianism and revolutionary impatience (the concepts of Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao, Tsai Ho-shen and Peng Shu-chih).

Owing to the petty-bourgeois nature and extremely weak theoretical grounding of the Chen Tu-hsiu leadership, the CPC was unable to formulate a comprehensive independent concept of the Chinese revolution. It was the Comintern which worked out the strategy and tactics of the Chinese revolution in the 1920s. On the basis of Lenin's ideas which permeated the resolutions on the colonial question adopted by the Second and Fourth congresses of the Comintern, the ECCI in a number of directives to the CPC and special decisions on the Chinese question, the most important of which were the comprehensive resolutions of the Sixth (March 1926) and Seventh (November-December 1926) enlarged plenums of the ECCI, offered a profound theoretical substantiation and numerous recommendations on such cardinal issues of the Chinese revolution as the character

of the revolution and the role of the different classes in it, the hegemony of the proletariat and its allies, the agrarian question, the tactics of a united national front, the role and purpose of the armed struggle, the correlation between the national and class aspects of the revolution, and so forth. The decisions of the Party congresses and plenary meetings of the CPC Central Committee which translated the fundamental instructions of the Comintern into the practical language of the Chinese revolution, were also drawn up and adopted with the direct participation of the Comintern's representatives in China. The basic principles for the CPC's strategy and tactics in the national democratic revolution, that were evolved by the Comintern with the direct participation of its representatives in China, built the theoretical and political foundation upon which the CPC based its activity in the following years, too. The Comintern directly contributed to the development of internationalist ideas in the CPC and the formation in its leadership of a group of Communists-internationalists (Li Ta-chao, Chu Chiu-po, Chang Tai-lei and others) who launched a determined struggle against manifestations of nationalism and other non-proletarian views in the Party.

In spite of the defeat of the 1925-27 revolution and the gross blunders of the Chen Tu-hsiu leadership of the CPC and heavy setbacks for the Party, the Chinese Communists accumulated valuable experience in the course of their struggle and used it in the next stages of the revolution. Among their achievements in that period were the formation of the CPC, its mastery of the experience of the international communist movement and formulation of the basic principles of communist strategy and tactics in the Chinese revolution, the establishment of extensive, though insufficiently strong, links with the working class, and also the initiation of a practical approach to the peasant question, the accumulation of experience in organising the masses, in building up a united front and evolving its tactics, and the Communists' first attempts to raise the independent armed forces of the revolution. It was also in this period that a proletarian-internationalist trend, which became the vehicle of the finest revolutionary traditions, gradually began to crystallise in the ranks of the CPC.

THE COMINTERN AND THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN CHINA UNDER THE SLOGAN OF THE SOVIETS (1927-1931)

A. M. GRIGORIEV

The years 1927-1931 occupy an important place in the evolution of CPC strategy and tactics. Many of the propositions set forth in CPC and Comintern documents relating to that period became elements of CPC strategy and tactics whose employment secured the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949. The CPC and the Comintern formulated their decisions bearing on the key problems of the Chinese revolution in a complex and critical situation characterised by a realignment of China's social and political forces after the defeat of the revolution of 1925-27.

Following the break up of the united front of the Kuomintang and the CPC, the former turned into a party dominated by the big bourgeoisie, the landowners and warlords.

Alarmed by the scope of the mass movement, the national bourgeoisie veered to the right. It repudiated the slogans of determined struggle against internal and external reaction, under which the revolution of 1925-27 developed, and Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People, and decided to compromise with the landlords, the warlords and imperialism in the struggle against the revolutionary movement of the toiling masses in the hope of attaining its objectives on the national-reformist platform.¹

In the face of the offensive launched by the counter-revolution the new CPC leadership headed by Chu Chiu-po organised armed revolutionary actions in the army (the Nanchang uprising), in rural areas (the Autumn Harvest Up-

¹ For a detailed assessment of the situation see: *The Latest History of China*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 122-30 (in Russian).

rising—a series of uprisings which took place from the autumn of 1927 to the spring of 1928) and in cities in an attempt to safeguard the gains of the revolution and stem the ebb of the revolutionary wave. These uprisings enabled the CPC to accumulate valuable experience of struggle and the organisation of the masses in the new conditions created by the split of the united front. The uprisings in the army and villages were the first steps towards the formation of the Party's own armed forces and the accomplishment of agrarian revolution.

The Nanchang uprising of August 1, 1927 was the beginning of the formation of CPC armed forces. Important decisions were made at the Extraordinary Conference of the CC CPC on August 7, 1927. It set the course towards an agrarian revolution, and decided to organise peasant uprisings in the provinces of Hunan, Kiangsi, Hupei and Kwangtung. The Theses of the Conference formulated a concrete programme for the uprisings. Emphasising that it was necessary to combine the armed struggle with an allround development of the agrarian revolution, they made the point that these uprisings should never take the form of strictly military actions without the support of the masses.¹ The series of Autumn Harvest Uprisings was organised along these lines.

Between the autumn of 1927 and the beginning of 1928, the CPC leadership, after having studied the experience of these actions, drew several important conclusions which it used in formulating its new course. In mid-October, following the defeat of the army of Nanchang insurgents, the Provisional Politbureau of the CC CPC recommended local Party organisations to organise guerrilla actions in the villages and unite the efforts of the regular troops under Communist control and the forces of the peasantry,² i. e., it set about employing the guerrilla struggle as a means to stir the peasantry to action and to build up its own armed forces.

¹ *Materials on the Chinese Question*, Moscow, 1927, pp. 4-9 (in Russian).

² "CC CPC Report Concerning the Defeat of the Armies of Ho Lung and Ye Ting", *Correspondence of the CC CPC*, October 30, 1927, No. 7 (in Chinese).

As it prepared for armed actions in a number of designated rural regions in the autumn and winter of 1927, the CPC, set the goal of initially organising small guerrilla bases and Soviet centres on the territory of one or two districts. As a directive this goal was finalised in the decisions of the November 1927 Plenary Meeting of the CC CPC which recommended that the peasants' actions should have the form of guerrilla warfare and said that it was necessary to "mobilise even greater revolutionary masses for participation in the revolution ... and for the seizure of land and power (Soviets) ..." in several districts in its course.¹ These decisions determined the policy of the leaders of the uprisings in Hailufeng, Northern Kwangtung and Southern and Eastern Hunan (Liling and Liuyang) which took place from the autumn of 1927 to the spring of 1928 and resulted in the establishment of the first seats of Soviet power.

In an article entitled "The Problems of an Armed Uprising" written in December 1927, Chu Chiu-po discussed the prospects of guerrilla actions in the villages in the context of the country's political fragmentation, the absence of a central authority in China and the weakness of the local feudal forces. In such a situation, he wrote, the revolution in China could not begin with the capture of the "capital city" and win in a single stroke. One of the ways for the revolutionary forces to mature, he continued, was a partisan war of the peasants in different provinces. Regarding this form of struggle as the "initial stage of the armed uprising" he wrote that "the partisan war, should lead to the establishment of revolutionary bases".²

Taking into account the successes and the setbacks of the Soviet bases in the struggle against the local warlords whose main objective in the internecine struggle was to seize large urban centres, the CC CPC decided that it would be best to set up guerrilla and Soviet bases in remote regions where there were no large contingents of the regular

¹ "The Political Resolution of the November 1927 Plenary Meeting of the CC CPC", *Materials on the Chinese Question*, Moscow, 1928, No. 1 (10), pp. 8, 10 (in Russian).

² Chu Chiu-po, "The Problems of an Armed Uprising", *Bolshevik*, 1928, No. 10, pp. 294, 297 (in Chinese).

troops of the reactionaries. At this stage, provided conditions were favourable, it recommended the establishment of autonomous bases acting independently of each other.¹

At the same time the CPC leadership based its decisions on the assumption that in the nearest future guerrilla actions and peasant uprisings in the villages would merge with uprisings in a number of major cities. The CPC leadership incorrectly assessed the complicated political situation at the end of 1927 and adopted a number of "leftist" decisions concerning the nature of the Chinese revolution and the actual state of affairs. Thus the November 1927 Plenary Meeting of the CPC Central Committee characterised the revolution in China as a "permanent"² revolution which would develop into a socialist one in the nearest future, and the situation in the country as a revolutionary situation, and accordingly set the course of promptly organising armed uprisings in urban and rural areas with the view to uniting these actions into a general uprising.³

The result was that alongside actions which at the end of 1927 and the beginning 1928 led to the formation of the first revolutionary bases and Red Army units, attempts were made to carry out unprepared putsch-type actions in some areas and urban centres which worsened the situation of the CPC and the red trade unions in the cities.

Following the suppression of the heroic uprising in Kwangchow (Canton) on December 11-13, 1927, the CPC leadership cancelled the plans for uprisings in cities and in all regions with the exception of rural areas in Hunan, Kiangsi and Kwantung. But it considered this decision as temporary and continued to act in keeping with its assessment of the situation as a "direct revolutionary situation", and believed that consequently the rise and existence of small Soviet centres in the countryside was possible.

¹ "The Letter from the Central to the Provincial Committees of Hunan, Hupei and Kiangsi" (10. III. 1928), in *The Documents of the Chinese Communist Party, 1927-1930*, Hong-Kong, 1970, p. 371.

² In spite of the ECCI assessment, this definition was proposed by the ECCI representative B. Lominadze and was actively supported by the "leftist" majority in the CPC leadership.

³ *Materials on the Chinese Question*, Moscow, 1928, No. 1 (10), pp. 7, 8-20 (in Russian).

THE NINTH PLENUM OF THE ECCI AND THE SIXTH CONGRESS OF THE CPC

In that difficult period the CPC received very considerable assistance from the Comintern. In a special Resolution on the Chinese Question, the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI, which met in February 1928, clearly defined the current situation and the nature of the Chinese revolution and outlined the basic principles of the CPC tactics for the immediate future. The Plenum pointed out that the Chinese revolution was going through a period of a heavy defeat, decline of the working-class and peasant movement and, consequently, should pursue the tactics of retreat and mobilisation of forces. "The centre of gravity of all Party activity at the given moment," stated the Resolution, "lies in winning to its side millions of workers and peasants, their political education, and their organisation around the Party and its slogans."¹ The Comintern urged the CPC to reject putschism which could doom the revolution and separate the Party from the masses.²

The ECCI Plenum made the point that the Chinese revolution was still a bourgeois-democratic revolution in its content, and specially underscored that "the characterisation given to the present phase of the Chinese revolution... as one already grown over into a socialist revolution is wrong. Equally wrong is defining it as a 'permanent' revolution (the position of the ECCI representative)".³

An especially important role in the further elaboration of the CPC line was the conclusion of the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI that the development of the revolution in various parts of China was uneven and that the working-class movement lagged behind the peasant movement.⁴ Taking into consideration the specific situation in the country (continuing revolutionary actions in the rural areas and the ebb of the revolutionary tide in cities and on a national scale),

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the National-Colonial Revolution. The Example of China*, Moscow, 1931, pp. 207-208 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 209.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁴ *Ibid.*

the ECCI advised the CPC to continue devoting serious attention to the organisation of peasant actions, and to reckon with the different conditions of the struggle from province to province, and bear in mind the main objective in the rural areas, namely the formation of Soviet regions and the armed forces of the CPC. "The main task of the Party and the Sovietised peasant districts," the resolution said, "is to carry out the agrarian revolution and organise Red Army units, having in view that they will later gradually merge into one national Chinese Red Army."¹

The Plenum outlined the main objectives of the CPC's organisational, ideological and political activities, and noted the characteristic errors of its organisations—under-estimation of the danger of putschism, terrorist methods of struggle in the trade unions, the forcing of strikes, enthusiasm for "left" phrases and vanguardism.²

The principles formulated in the resolution of the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI served as the basis for the CPC in preparations for its Sixth Congress. Because of the mounting counter-revolutionary terror in the country, the Congress, which initially was to have convened in China in March 1928, took place in the summer of that year in the Soviet Union.

The Congress held its sessions near Moscow from June 18 to July 11, 1928. It was attended by 118 delegates of whom 84 had a deciding and 34 a consultative vote.

An ECCI delegation took an active part in the proceedings of the Congress, and its leader delivered the report "The International Situation and the Tasks of the CPC." The delegates also heard and discussed the CC Report (delivered by Chu Chiu-po), a report of the CPC delegation in the ECCI on the decisions of the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI on the Chinese question (Hsiang Chung-fa), reports on organisational matters and work in the military sphere (Chou En-lai), reports on work in the trade unions (Hsiang Chung-fa and a representative of the Red Trade Union International) and reports on the agrarian programme and the peasant movement (Li Li-san). The Congress adopted

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, p. 209.

² *Ibid.*, p. 210.

a Political Resolution, special resolutions on the main questions of Party work and CPC Draft Rules, and elected a new Central Committee. The delegates discussed all the major problems of Party life and work.¹

The Congress made a serious study to the character of the Chinese revolution and the current situation. This was necessary because earlier and in the course of discussions at the Congress facts were brought to light which showed that "leftist" views on these issues became rooted in the Party. One group in the CPC leadership proceeded from the assumption that the Chinese revolution, being bourgeois-democratic at the time, would shortly grow over into a socialist revolution. In other words, it in effect continued to adhere to the positions of the November 1927 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee. This opinion was most frankly expressed at the Congress by Li Li-san.² Some Communists in the rural areas believed that the Chinese revolution was becoming a socialist revolution in view of the promotion of the slogan calling for the confiscation and uniform distribution of land. These views, it was pointed out at the Congress, were nourished by petty-bourgeois conceptions of socialism, as well as by the influence of a large strata of lumpen proletarians in the Chinese village. "The majority of the delegates at this Congress," said one of the speakers, "are now aware that this, of course, is not socialism, but many Chinese comrades who are working in the peasant movement, still fail to see this. I think that comrades such as Mao Tse-tung, even now think that we have socialism just because the slogan is already there"³ (confiscation of

¹ The Congress also adopted the following documents: Resolution on the Trade Union Movement, Resolution on the Agrarian Question (The Peasant Movement), on the Organisation of Soviet Power, Resolution on Agitation and Propaganda, Resolution on the Communist Youth League of China, Resolution on the Women's Question, Organisational Tasks of the CPC, The Address of the Congress to Party Organisations, Resolution on the Formulation of the Party Programme, Resolution on the National Question. (See: *Verbatim Report of the Sixth Congress of the CPC*, Book 6, "Resolutions of the Sixth CPC Congress.")

² *Ibid.*, Book 2, pp. 88-89.

³ *Ibid.*, Book 4, p. 50. Mao Tse-tung evaluated the stage which the revolution in China had entered as a socialist one in a letter from Hunan to the CC CPC of August 20, 1927 (See: *Correspondence*

land and the egalitarian distribution of the landowners' land and property.)

The Congress endorsed the Comintern's assessment of the revolution in China as a bourgeois-democratic revolution whose three main tasks were to struggle for the country's national independence and unification, for the abolition of landlord property rights and all feudal survivals and for the overthrow of the rule of reactionary Kuomintang, the rule of the bourgeois-landowner bloc, and its revolutionary replacement with a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry in the form of Soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies.¹

Throughout the next period of revolutionary movement in China this appraisal served as a basic concept for the Marxist forces in the CPC in their struggle against leftist deviations and tendencies in assessing the character of the revolution, and against Trotskyite and similar theories of the Chinese revolution which in effect negated its anti-feudal objectives.

But the Congress' definition of the motive forces in the revolution, namely, its estimation of the national bourgeoisie as a counter-revolutionary force which had expended its revolutionary potentialities in the anti-imperialist struggle and was no longer capable of even partially solving the individual tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution,² smacked strongly of sectarianism. Reflecting the situation in the country following the defeat of the 1925-27 revolution (chiefly the attitude of diverse bourgeois groups to the CPC and to the Communist-led revolutionary actions of workers and peasants), this assessment, which persisted throughout

of the CC CPC, August 30, 1927, No. 3 [in Chinese].) Addressing the Congress the Hunan delegate said: "There is a deviation, a special theory of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, in the province of Hunan. He has a system of ideas. . . . He said that now we are entering a direct workers' and peasants' revolution, that is, a socialist revolution. . . . I must say that Comrade Mao's view that the revolution has already become a socialist one has become widespread. . . ." (*Verbatim Report of the Sixth Congress of the CPC*, Book 2, pp. 80-81).

¹ "Political Resolution of the Sixth Congress of the CPC", *Programme Documents of the Communist Parties of the East*, Moscow, 1934, pp. 15-16 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 22.

the bourgeois-democratic period of the revolution, became in the early 1930s one of the sources of the Communist Party's sectarian-dogmatic approach to the search for allies and inhibited the creative generalisation of experience of revolutionary struggle.¹

It was very important that the Congress correctly evaluated the current situation and condemned putschism. It confirmed the ECCI's definition (Ninth Plenum): "The current situation is in the main characterised by lack of revolutionary upsurge among the broad masses of the Chinese people."²

The Congress noted that the irreconcilable nature of the contradictions which engendered the Chinese revolution made its future upsurge imminent and that this upsurge would confront the Party once again with the task of preparing an armed uprising on an all-China scale. It went on to say that now, however, the slogan of an armed uprising throughout the country could only be of a propagandistic nature,³ and that since "the first wave of the revolution ended in a heavy defeat and the second has not arrived as yet", the Party's general line should be a struggle to win over the masses to its side.⁴

Outlining the prospects for the development of the revolutionary forces, the Sixth Congress of the CPC proceeded from the conclusion of the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI concerning the uneven development of the revolution in China. Enlarging upon this proposition with due consideration for the previous experience of the struggle (in particular, the experience of the Kwantung revolutionary base), the Congress reached the conclusion that in future, under the conditions of a revolutionary upsurge, "victory [of the revolution—A.G.] in one or several main provinces will be possible".⁵ That the Congress acted correctly when it adopted the line of gaining a relatively stable territory as a base for the further development of the revolution was confirmed by the entire subsequent course of the revolutionary movement in China.

¹ *The Communist International. A Short Historical Essay*, Moscow, p. 302 (in Russian).

² *The Political Resolution of the Sixth Congress of the CPC*, p. 21.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

In addition to the general Political Resolution, three other special documents dealt with the struggle in the countryside: Resolution on the Agrarian Question, Resolution on the Peasant Movement, and also the Resolution on the Organisation of Soviet Power which examined the organisation of revolutionary bodies of government—the Soviets—and the armed forces of the revolution.

The Resolution on the Agrarian Question on the whole correctly defined the socio-economic relations in the village as “shot through with survivals of feudal relations” and called them “semi-feudal”¹ (although it somewhat exaggerated the development of capitalism). It also mentioned the specific features of landownership and land tenure in various parts of the country and a range of important specific features in the Chinese village in general—absence of large landed estates, land-hunger and the predominance of peasants either with small plots or no land at all in the structure of the rural population.

A detailed description of the forms of exploitation and their class interweaving given in the Resolution made it possible to ascertain the conditions of the various sections of the peasantry in the country and helped the Congress to formulate the criteria of social stratification.

The Resolution defined the main classes and social strata in the Chinese village and their peculiarities: landlords and the gentry (with the predominance of middle and small landowners), kulaks (two types of kulaks and the predominance of the “semi-kulak and semi-landlord”), a section of “independent peasants”—middle peasants and the mass of land-hungry peasants (“small”, “parcelled”, and “semi-proletarian” according to the terminology used in the Resolution) and wholly landless peasants included into the category of the agricultural proletariat.²

The qualification of the mass of landless peasants (village paupers, in fact) as agricultural proletariat proved to

¹ “Resolution on the Agrarian Question”, p. 39. The Congress rejected the definition of the agrarian system in China as “transitional from Asiatic mode of production to capitalism” contained in the Draft Agrarian Programme drawn up in the autumn of 1927 (*Ibid.*).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

be of dual significance. On the one hand, it drew the Party's special attention to the need to organise this numerically huge social section with its very considerable anti-feudal potentialities. People belonging to this section comprised the bulk of the Red Army troops; the Red Guard and the Young Guard. On the other hand, the description of the mass of village paupers as rural proletarians (just as their definition by the CPC in the early 1930s as the “village poor”) tended to efface the specific situation of this section, its psychology and requirements, to obliterate the fact that its egalitarianism, as Marx pointed out, was not an expression of the proletarian understanding of equality, but a reflection of the envy towards the propertied by would-be petty proprietors in this case by the pre-capitalist type.

The agrarian programme adopted at the Congress insisted on the confiscation of all landed estates and their distribution among the landless peasants. The Congress made the point that it was too early to advance the slogan calling for the nationalisation of the land, and that the Party would return to it after the victory of the revolution.¹

In its decisions the Congress made it clear that the Party's mainstay in the village was the poorest peasants, and that the success of its work depended largely on the establishment of an alliance with the middle peasants.

The Resolution on the Peasant Movement² examined the character, types and the basic forms of the peasant struggle and expounded what tactics and slogans the Party would employ in organising peasant actions. It suggested that the tactics should take into account the different levels and forms of struggle in various regions, and the need to move on from partial demands to the main demands of the agrarian revolution.

Based on an analysis of the experience of the peasants' armed struggle in the preceding period, this resolution examined and outlined practically all the main problems which the Chinese Communists later encountered in the rural regions. The main feature of the decisions on the agrarian-peasant question adopted at the Congress was that they en-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

² Published in *Far Eastern Affairs*, Moscow, 1973, No. 2, pp. 154-62 (in Russian).

visaged the use of all the existing forms of the peasants' struggle and their armed organisations and their merger under CPC leadership in a general struggle against the forces of reaction.

The significance of the decisions taken at the Congress concerning the formation of the Red Army and its strategy and tactics, drawn up with the assistance of prominent Soviet military specialists, was just as far-reaching. These decisions defined the main ways of raising the army (guerrilla warfare, traditional peasant organisations, uprisings in the army units of the warlords), its structure and the types of the armed forces. It was planned to raise Red Army units and para-military local detachments of the Red Guard and the Young Guard which would be connected with them, provide for the training and constitute the reserve of the main forces. The foundation of the Red Army's strategy and tactics was to be guerrilla warfare. Special attention was focussed on political education and selection of commanders and political instructors. The Party was set the task of assuming unconditional leadership of the newly-formed armed forces of the revolution.¹

In general, the decisions of the Congress concerning work in the countryside² were intended to step up the peasant war under the Party's leadership, i.e., they paved the way for a process which made up the main content of the people's revolution in China. In the new Draft Rules of the CPC which it adopted, the Congress changed the wording of some of the clauses contained in the old Rules, particularly on the question of Party membership and its leading bodies.

¹ Key decisions of the Sixth Congress concerning the development of the armed forces: Political Resolution, Section 16, "The Main Tasks of the Party in the Peasant Movement", and Section 20, "In the Field of Military Works and the Soldiers' Movement", (*Programme Documents...*, pp. 29-30, 32); Resolution on the Organisation of Soviet Power, Section IV, "Organisation of the Red Army", (*Ibid.*, pp. 55-57, 58-59).

² An analysis of these documents and their collation with documents which Maoist and pro-Maoist historians present as proof that Mao Tse-tung allegedly "on his own" formulated "the only correct line" in the agrarian-peasant and military questions, show that the overwhelming majority of the corresponding premises in his works are a simple repetition, if sometimes presented in more detail, of those formulated by the Sixth CPC Congress.

In the Draft Rules and the Resolution on Organisational Questions, the Congress demanded the implementation of the principles of democratic centralism, and the elimination of factionalism, unprincipled intrigue and bossism.

In its decisions on the Soviet movement in China, the Congress characterised the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies as instruments of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry",¹ whose task was to expand the Soviet regions, build up a regular Red Army, radically implement the agrarian programme, establish a Soviet government system which would draw the masses into the administration, and destroy the political and economic positions of the dominating classes (while preserving the freedom of commodity turnover and protecting the property rights of the petty bourgeoisie).²

On the basis of the Congress' assessment of the motive forces of the revolution, the resolution noted that the composition of the Soviets elected by the working masses by direct ballot should include "representatives of the lower sections of the petty bourgeoisie" with "the workers playing the leading role".³ This principle which was adopted in view of the correlation of the class forces at the time, made it possible not to draw representatives of other sections capable of participating in the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist revolution in the organs of power, thus giving "leftist" elements a pretext to interpret the Soviets as organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat, even though there was no industrial proletariat in most of the agricultural regions of China where the Soviets were being established.

The Sixth Congress drew up its decisions on the basis of the experience of the Party's work in the years when its activity was centred on the cities. Obviously the Congress could not foresee all the conditions with which the Party had to cope in the future. Moreover, the decisions on some questions were influenced by the experience of the Communists in other countries with a higher level of development than China.

Nevertheless, the Sixth Congress was of tremendous significance for the young Communist Party of China. In practi-

¹ "Political Resolution of the Sixth Congress of the CPC", p. 16.

² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

cal terms, the Congress gave the Party a comprehensive programme which determined its further development and consolidation.¹

The regular contacts of the Congress' delegates with representatives of the ECCI and the CPSU enabled the Chinese Communists to draw on the experience of the world communist and liberation movement in resolving their problems; they were a good school for the CPC leadership and accelerated the Party's theoretical and political development.² The Sixth Congress of the Comintern which took place shortly afterwards approved the decisions of the Sixth CPC Congress.

THE ECCI AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA AFTER THE SIXTH CPC CONGRESS

The experience of the first year after the Congress showed the importance of its decisions in restoring and consolidating Party ranks and the practical value of its conclusions concerning the prospects of the revolutionary struggle. On the other hand, the course of events made it necessary to clarify and further develop some of the premises elaborated by the Congress, and new problems appeared for whose solution the world communist movement had no ready recipes.

Developments confirmed the conclusion of the Ninth Plenum of the ECCI and the Sixth Congress of the CPC about the uneven development of the revolutionary struggle in China, both in individual regions and in cities and villages.

The Party encountered serious objective difficulties in the cities. The reactionaries were particularly concerned with strengthening their positions and suppressing the revolutionary forces in cities which were centres of the movement in the period of the 1925-27 revolution. The Kuomintang re-

¹ Officially the Sixth Congress did not adopt a programme, for at the time the Programme of the Comintern was being formulated. The Congress instructed the Party leadership to submit a Draft Programme for approval at the Seventh Congress.

² For more details about the Sixth Congress of the CPC and the ideological struggle provoked by its decisions see: A. M. Grigoriev, "An Important Landmark in the History of the Chinese Communist Party", *Chinese Studies in History*, White Plains, 1975, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 18-44.

gime widely resorted to wanton police terror combining it with nationalist and reformist tactics and rhetoric designed to cut off the narrow stratum of the more qualified and literate workers from the urban working masses. Its chauvinistic propaganda was intended to muffle the socio-economic demands of the working people. The position of the workers and the situation of the Red Trade Unions, which were driven underground, was seriously affected by the counter-offensive of the proprietors, the replacement of men workers by women and juveniles and the unemployment which assumed a mass character under the impact of the world economic crisis.

The Party also faced subjective difficulties in the cities: the great shortage of trade union organisers from among the workers in the Party's ranks, lack of experience of fighting for partial, economic demands, underestimation of their importance, and also the influence of the yellow trade unions, i.e., Kuomintang-operated reformist unions. As a result a theory became current in the CPC according to which reformism in China could have no roots in the labour movement inasmuch as the latter could not have a worker aristocracy, and that heavy oppression "automatically revolutionised" the mass of the workers.¹

As it generalised the experience of the Chinese trade unions, the ECCI greatly helped the CPC to organise its activity in the trade unions by training cadres of union organisers and labour press managers. After the Congress the CC CPC in keeping with an ECCI recommendation decided that it would first concentrate its work on some of the main industrial centres.² In a letter to the CC CPC in February 1929 the ECCI noted the growth of the Kuomintang trade unions and the weakness of the revolutionary trade union movement and said it was wrong to underestimate the influence of the yellow trade unions. The ECCI suggested that the CC CPC should work out the plan of its activities in the trade unions along two main directions. In the first place it advised the CC to formulate the tactics of legalising

¹ *Fourth Congress of the Red Trade Union International, Verbatim report*, Moscow, 1928, pp. 138-39.

² "CC CPC Circular No. 15 (November 8, 1928)", in *Political Work of the CPC After the Sixth Congress, 1929*, p. 42 (in Chinese).

the revolutionary trade unions under the cover of the already existing fraternities and associations (i.e., where the legal existence of the Red trade unions was impossible), and also to take advantage of the system of factory committees and regular meetings of workers' delegates. In the second place the ECCI insisted that it was necessary to promote work in the yellow trade unions, which was of paramount importance for winning the mass of workers away from the Kuomintang and the reformists.¹ In June 1929 the ECCI once again examined the question of the trade union movement in China and adopted a detailed resolution on CPC activity in the trade unions. In this document the ECCI recommended a campaign in the Party to explain the importance of the Communists and the revolutionary workers joining the Kuomintang trade unions and gaining strong positions there.²

On the whole, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Chinese Communists and the Comintern's assistance, the CPC by the end of 1929 partially re-established the network of Party organisations in the cities and took the first steps towards restoring its links with the working class. According to the figures given by the Fifth Congress of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (November 1929) there were 24 Red trade unions in Shanghai with a total membership of 50,000, and ten in Hsiangkang with 4,000-5,000 members.³

Conditions for revolutionary activity were more favourable in the Chinese village where the domination of medieval relations and the arbitrary rule of the militarists created an explosive situation. It was further aggravated by the new series of militarist wars which began in the spring of 1929 and whipped up a great wave of spontaneous peasant actions in regions south of the Yangtze. The disintegration of the armies of warlords increased. All these factors created fresh opportunities for invigorating the Soviet partisan movement,

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, pp. 232-33.

² "The ECCI Resolution on the Work of the CPC in the Trade Unions", in *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, pp. 248-51.

³ "The Working-Class Movement in China in 1929", *Bulletin of the Institute of Chinese Studies*, Moscow, 1930, No. 2, pp. 19-20 (in Russian).

establishing new revolutionary bases and forming Red Army units.

The Comintern provided considerable assistance for the CPC to exploit these opportunities, which were pointed out in the decisions of the Sixth Congress of the CPC. An important role in this respect was played by the ECCI delegation—the Far Eastern Bureau of the ECCI—which began to work in China in April 1929.

The documents which the CC CPC adopted in March and April at the advice of the ECCI said that it was necessary to make the utmost use of the situation created by the militarist wars and the spontaneous actions of the peasantry in order to increase the numerical strength of the Red Army and develop the Soviet movement. "The Red Army forces," said a CC circular to the local organisations, "are a prerequisite for the eventual victory of the revolution."¹

In June 1929, the ECCI sent a Letter on the Peasant Question to the CC CPC. Referring to data about the peasant movement in the south of China, it said that there were prospects for an upsurge in the peasant movement and the rapid revolutionisation of the peasantry.²

The letter offered recommendations concerning the forms of the peasant movement; it drew the CPC's attention to the specific tasks connected with the training of cadres for work in the countryside, and pointed out that farm labourers, and the poor and middle peasants were the mass force in the Chinese village whose stand would determine the outcome of the agrarian revolution. The ECCI emphasised that the policy of establishing an "alliance with the kulaks" that had quite a number of supporters in the CPC was harmful. It gave a more precise definition of the "kulak of the old type" (a "landlord-kulak"). It suggested that the CPC should get the peasants to fight against this section of the rural population too, and concentrate mainly on helping the poorest farm labourers and peasants to cast off the influence of the exploiting upper sections and organising all the ex-

¹ "Direction of the Work in the Course of the Struggle Against the Militarist War", CC CPC Circular No. 34, April 10, 1929, in *Political Work of the CPC After the Sixth Congress*, p. 223 (in Chinese).

² *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, pp. 236-38, 244.

exploited (through groups of poor peasants, peasant unions and farm labourers' trade unions) under the Party's slogans.¹

The Second Plenary Meeting of the CC CPC (June 1929) emphasised the need to invigorate the struggle in the countryside under the conditions of militarist wars and the spontaneous actions of the peasantry and focussed the attention of all organisations of the Party on expanding the guerrilla war in the villages and strengthening the Red Army. In a special Letter to Commanders and Men of the Red Army the meeting spelled out the revolutionary army's special tasks in China: "You should become not only the fighters of the revolution, but also revolutionary propagandists and organisers."²

In September 1929 a Military Commission of the CC CPC acting on ECCI advice sent a directive to Red Army units instructing them to establish the institute of political commissars, define the functions of the military and political organs, and military and Party organisations, i.e., to step up political work among the troops. The training of military cadres for the Red Army of China in the USSR, who began arriving in China in 1929, played a major role in the development of the CPC armed forces. By the end of the year, the heroic struggle of the Chinese Communists resulted in the establishment of new guerrilla bases and the formation of new and the enlargement of the existing Red Army units in the western regions of Fuchian, the southwestern and southeastern parts of Kiangsi, eastern Kwantung, western and northeastern Hunan, western Hupei and in Kwangsi.

In view of the changes that took place in the situation in the country and the position of the CPC, the new experience of the struggle, the new features in the alignment of the revolutionary forces—weak positions in towns and rapid growth in the villages—the Party had to introduce greater clarity into its line. But it was unable to do this because of the enduring leftist-putschist views of a considerable part of the CPC leadership in the centre and in local branches. In 1929 the ECCI and its Far Eastern Bureau repeatedly

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, pp. 240-43.

² "Second Plenary Meeting of the CC CPC", *Bolshevik*, Special issue, 1929, Vol. 2, No. 9, p. 167 (in Chinese).

warned the CPC of this danger—in its February (1929) letter to the CC CPC,¹ in April, when the CC CPC formulated directives to local Party organisations and in June, during the sittings of the Second Plenary Meeting of the CC CPC. Another recurrence of the leftist-putschist course in the Party became manifest in November 1929, at the Kiangsu Province Party conference when the Li Li-san leadership of the CPC came forward with the concept of an "automatic" creation of a revolutionary situation, completely disregarding the uneven development of the revolutionary forces and their actual potential at the time.

On December 6, 1929, already after the peaceful settlement of the conflict on the Chinese Eastern Railway, the CPC leadership, despite sharp objections from the Far Eastern Bureau of the ECCI, issued a circular which under the slogan of "armed defence of the USSR" demanded that local Party organisations should prepare uprisings in the cities and in Kuomintang army units and to expedite the growth of the Red Army by incorporating armed peasant detachments into its ranks.² This directive intensified "leftist" sentiments which made themselves felt in the local organisations throughout 1929.³

The ECCI's political letter that reached China in the latter half of December 1929 caused the CC CPC to suspend the development of the "leftist" course for the time being. Saying that China had entered a period of a profound national crisis, the ECCI re-emphasised that the Party's main tasks were to strengthen its ranks politically and organisationally, and to win over the masses. It also stressed that it was impossible "to foretell the rate at which the general national crisis will grow into a direct revolutionary situation".⁴ Mentioning the growth of the spontaneous peasant

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, p. 226.

² "Circular of the CC CPC No. 60", *Materials on the History of the CPC*, Vol. 4, Tokyo, 1972, pp. 525-29 (in Japanese).

³ For instance, in early April 1929, Mao Tse-tung in a letter to the CC CPC presented a "leftist" plan for "capturing Kiangsi Province within a year", which the Central Committee rejected at the time. See: Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1953, p. 306 (in Russian).

⁴ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 10, No. 2, January 9, 1930, p. 29.

movement in the south of China and the need to raise as many Red Army units as possible in that part of the country, the ECCI underscored the weakness of the Red trade unions. "Communist work in the reformist Kuomintang unions is not serious enough.... And of course the Party has not yet solved the problem of struggle for a majority of the working class, it has not solved the most urgent problem of taking the lead in the spontaneous economic and political struggle of the proletariat. The Party has not yet become the skirmisher, the organiser and the leader in the revolutionary struggle of the broad masses."¹

LEFTIST-ADVENTURIST DEVIATION IN THE CPC ("LI LI-SANISM") AND THE STAND OF THE COMINTERN

In view of stand adopted by the ECCI Li Li-san and his adherents thought it best to modify their tactics. They decided to conceal their line from the ECCI and its Far Eastern Bureau for a time and when it was carried into practice present them with a *fait accompli*.

At the end of February 1930 the CC CPC sent Circular No. 70 to the Party organisations. Ignoring the uneven development of the struggle, the CC claimed that the whole of China, from Kwantung to Chihli and from Szechwan to Kiangsu was in the grip of a revolutionary crisis and that the Party had re-established its positions in Kwangchow and Harbin. It demanded "organisation of political work among the workers, local uprisings and army mutinies". The document asserted that: "In the current situation victory is possible at first in one or several provinces, Wuhan and the adjoining regions, in particular," and, furthermore, suggested that it was necessary to combine "soldier mutinies with the plan for a nation-wide insurrection". It went on: "If re-dislocated in the direction of the big cities, the Red Army can play a decisive role in the revolution and turn the Party into a direct motive factor of the revolutionary upsurge." At a meeting in March the CC CPC Politbureau went as far as

discussing a plan for an incursion into Wuhan and for expediting the Wuhan uprising.

In a series of articles published in March and April in the *Hungchi* journal Li Li-san began piecemeal propaganda of the basic principles of his line which were then expounded in a resolution of the CC CPC Politbureau of June 11, 1930, "On the New Revolutionary Upsurge and the Winning of Power at First in One or Several Provinces". At the end of May 1930, without waiting for this resolution to be adopted, Li Li-san set forth the practical recommendations of his "offensive line" at a Conference of Representatives of Soviet Regions in China, concealing the content of his statement from the ECCI Far Eastern Bureau.

The line set forth at that Conference and then in the resolution of CC CPC Politbureau differed from the Comintern's course on all basic issues. The Comintern reckoned with the uneven development of the revolutionary struggle in China, whereas Li Li-san contended that the line of "winning power first in one or several provinces" had to be accompanied by armed uprisings in all major Chinese cities and result in a revolutionary explosion across the country. Although the ECCI pointed out that it would be wrong to steer a course towards an armed uprising without first winning over the masses, the Li Li-sanites urged an immediate uprising calculating that they could rapidly organise the masses in the process. They argued that the Chinese revolution was turning into the "main centre of world revolution" and its "powder keg". Maintaining that all "imperialist contradictions were concentrated" in China, they declared that a revolution in China would set off a world revolution. Overestimating the possibility of a revolutionary explosion in China and the impact it might produce, the authors of the resolution at the same time contradicted themselves by saying that the victory of the revolution in China depended only on the victory of the world revolution. The Comintern on its part, held that the Chinese revolution would remain a bourgeois-democratic revolution and that its growth into a socialist revolution would be a relatively long process depending on the ripening of certain objective and subjective internal conditions. The "leftists" in the CPC leadership believed that the revolution in China beginning as

¹ International Press Correspondence, Vol. 10, No. 2, January 9, 1930, p. 30.

a harbinger of a world revolution would immediately assume a socialist character, and that it was the dictatorship of the proletariat and not the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry which could and should become the revolutionary authority.

In line with such an approach the Li Li-san leadership at a Conference of Representatives of the Soviet Regions in May 1930 secured the passage of a provisional law on land prohibiting the transfer of the confiscated land into private hands, its lease, purchase and sale and advised the Soviets to establish collective farms. Under this law no land was allotted to Red Army men.¹

When assessing the stand of the CPC leadership at the time it has to be taken into account that the reference to world revolution in the resolution of June 11, 1930 was designed to conceal another plan, that of provoking a world war. It was by means of a world war, which was what the words "world revolution" actually implied, that the "leftists" hoped to hasten the revolution in China.

Li Li-san presented this plan to the CC CPC Politbureau on August 1 and 3, 1930. "All the contradictions of imperialism are reflected in a most acute form in the Chinese question," he said on August 1. "Therefore the question of imperialism remains the most important question of the Chinese revolution." He went on to say that the "victory of the Chinese revolution amounts to the overthrow of the rule of the imperialists. In order to overthrow the warlords and the Kuomintang it is necessary to overthrow the imperialists.... The Chinese revolution will be able to defeat the imperialists only in the event of a world revolution.... In the course of this struggle [the revolutionary struggle in China—A. G.] it will be possible to spur on a world revolution."

The Li Li-san leadership offered the Politbureau a concrete plan for "a world revolutionary explosion". The first part of the plan envisaged the organisation of an uprising in Wuhan and Nanking and a general strike in Shanghai. "These actions," Li Li-san said, "are not only decisive for the Chinese revolution, but also are serious issues of the world revolution."

¹ *The Problems of China*, 1930, Nos. 4-5, pp. 188-89.

olution." The second part envisaged simultaneous uprisings in Peking, Tientsin, Tangshan, Chengchow and Kaifeng. The Southern Bureau of the CC was to organise an uprising in Canton, and then in Hongkong in order to draw Britain into the struggle.

Very important was the third part of the plan dealing with Manchuria. "An uprising in Manchuria," said Li Li-san, "will be a prologue to an international war because Manchuria is under the yoke of Japanese imperialism. Not only will this be an internal battle against Chang Hsueh-liang, but also a struggle against Japanese imperialism; at the same time Japan would launch a savage offensive against the USSR." He went on to say: "The situation in Manchuria is such that when an uprising breaks out it will undoubtedly precipitate an international war. It should be noted that our strategy is also to draw the international proletariat into a decisive battle against imperialism."

After that, according to Li Li-san, events would take the following course: "Immediately after the victory of the uprising in China, Mongolia has to issue a political declaration, unite with Soviet power in China, recognise itself as a republic of the Chinese Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and then raise a large army which would mount an offensive against the north [of China—A. G.]. Secondly, it will be necessary to assemble hundreds of thousands of Chinese workers in Siberia and quickly arm and prepare them for a war against Japanese imperialism, i.e., to ensure their passage through Mongolia, so that they will unite with the insurrectionists in China and join the offensive against the enemy."

The Li Li-san leadership advised the Comintern "immediately to adopt an offensive course". Evidently realising that such recommendations greatly smacked of Trotskyism, Li Li-san hastened to say: "This is by no means Trotskyism." He claimed that such an offensive course, i.e., instigation of a world revolution through a world war would accelerate the building of socialism in the USSR. "This offensive course would make it possible to accomplish the plan for socialist construction, the five-year plans and so forth at an ever faster rate," he told the Politbureau of the CC CPC.

Li Li-san's leftist ideas stimulated putschist feelings in the localities and won the support of the Front Committee

headed by Mao Tse-tung. In early April 1930 the Li Li-san leadership sent a letter to the Front Committee with the instruction that the troops should proceed northward in order to attack Nanchang with Wuhan as the final destination. The plan for capturing Kiangsi should become a component of the overall strategic plan. These instructions from the centre coincided with intentions of Mao Tse-tung who in early 1930 once again returned to the idea of capturing Kiangsi Province. More than two months prior to the possible receipt of this letter and almost a month before the CC CPC sent its Circular No 70 ordering the armies to advance on major cities, representatives of three army corps operating in Kiangsi held a meeting in the province. They formed a united front of three army corps in Kiangsi under Mao Tse-tung's command and decided to capture the province and then mount an offensive on Nanchang and Chiuchiang.

After the Conference of the Representatives of the Soviet Regions, the Red Army corps were united into army groups which launched a drive on the industrial centres of the Hupei, Hunan and Kiangsi provinces.

In early July the Revolutionary Military Council of the Red Army sent a cable signed by Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh to the CC CPC which said: "Objective and subjective conditions for the victory of the revolution throughout the country are now completely ripe; a fresh upsurge of the revolution has set in. In this political situation it is the urgent task of the revolutionary masses to concentrate all forces, seize political power in the whole country and seal the victory of the revolution on a nation-wide scale. The Revolutionary Military Council has ordered the First Corps to move into position for attacking Nanchang and the Second and Third Corps for launching an assault on Wuhan. As a result victory will be assured in Hunan, Hupei and Kiangsi and this in turn will lead to the victory of the revolution in the whole country."¹

The offensive on Wuhan bogged down at the distant approaches and the attacking forces sustained heavy losses. At the end of July Red Army corps stormed Changsha. The officers and men fought courageously, but the balance of

¹ Hatano Kenichi, *History of the CPC. A Review of Sources*, Vol. I, Tokyo, 1961, p. 511 (in Japanese).

strength was not in favour of the Red Army, something which the leadership carried away by its adventuristic sentiments refused to see. Although the city was captured on July 31, it was abandoned shortly afterwards.

The adventuristic course pursued by Li Li-san jeopardised the development of the Party and the Red Army, and the ECCI and its Far Eastern Bureau put in a great deal of work to rectify the errors in the views and practices of the CPC leadership. Both the ECCI and the Far Eastern Bureau worked in extremely difficult conditions. The activity of the ECCI representatives in China at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s and their ways and means for obtaining information, particularly from the hinterland, were very seriously curtailed. Consequently the ECCI and the Far Eastern Bureau obtained the bulk of their information from the CC CPC. The CPC leadership, in an attempt to involve the ECCI into the realisation of its course, supplied it with misleading information, concealed its actual activity and directives, and furnished the ECCI and the Far Eastern Bureau with overstated assessments and data about the strength of the CPC, the trade unions and the Red Army. Finally, it embarked on a course of struggling against the Comintern. It is important to underscore this because the role played by the ECCI and the relations between the Comintern and the CPC in that period, have been crudely falsified by bourgeois historians and deliberately distorted by pro-Maoist writers in order to boost the cult of Mao Tse-tung.¹

The ECCI and its Far Eastern Bureau took steps to prevent the realisation of the "leftist" course from its very outset. As we have said above, the differences between the Politbureau of the CC CPC and the Far Eastern Bureau of the

¹ Contemporary Chinese historiography is silent about the Comintern's role. The pertinent section in *Decisions on Certain Questions of the CPC History* (April 1945) is written in such a way as to mislead the reader into believing that it was Mao's special demand that led to the liquidation of the Li Li-sanism. (See: Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 332-33). Bourgeois historians follow the Trotskyites who groundlessly assert that Li Li-san acted on orders from Moscow and that he allegedly became a "scapegoat". (See: H. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, Stanford, 1951, p. 303; B. Schwartz, *Chinese Communists and the Rise of Mao*, Cambridge, 1952, p. 179-84).

ECCI over the evaluation of the situation and Party tactics first arose at the end of 1929-beginning of 1930. But since after the December 1929 letter of the ECCI to the CC CPC, the "leftists" steered their course covertly, the ECCI and the FEB had no idea of how far Li Li-sanites had gone up until the June 11, 1930 resolution of the CC CPC.

When the content of the resolution became known the Far Eastern Bureau resolutely opposed the "leftist" precepts of the Politbureau of the CC CPC. On June 20, 1930, the FEB sent a letter to the Politbureau of the CC CPC criticising the resolution of June 11 and outlining the stand of the Comintern. "Your resolution," the letter said, "is directed against the Comintern's line." The Politbureau tried to represent its disagreement with the ECCI's line as a disagreement with the FEB. In its messages to the ECCI it accused the FEB of having a poor idea of the situation in China, employing wrong methods of leadership and of a "systematic right deviation".

On July 18, the Li Li-san leadership requested the ECCI to sanction uprisings in Wuhan, Changsha and Shanghai and a general strike in Nanking. At the end of the month the ECCI Presidium resolutely rejected this plan. After that the CPC launched a propaganda campaign against the ECCI. Rumours were spread that the ECCI allegedly had "no idea about the situation in China", that it was "poorly informed". Later Li Li-san admitted that he and his supporters "fostered sentiments in the masses which could serve as a pretext for resisting the ECCI line... we said that it was necessary to struggle against the ECCI line. The masses were led to believe that our line was... correct, and that of the ECCI... incorrect". At the same time the CPC leadership disregarding the Comintern's instructions continued to work for an immediate uprising.

At the beginning of August it decided to unite Party, Communist Youth and trade union organisations into action committees, i.e., centres that would guide the projected uprisings. At the same time in its correspondence with the Comintern, the Politbureau declared its "loyalty to the ECCI" and "strict observance of the ECCI line" and tried to create the impression that it would not go ahead with its plans without the approval of the ECCI.

On August 5, 1930 the Politbureau sent a letter to the ECCI Presidium asking it to reverse its decision and permit the uprising. The Politbureau asseverated that "in China there are five million organised and armed peasants, and on the whole not less than 30 million people incorporated in various organisations". On August 8 a similar letter signed by Hsiang Chung-fa was sent to Stalin.

Without waiting for a reply the Politbureau continued to steer its course. On August 14, 1930 *Hungchi* carried Li Li-san's "Declaration of the CPC on the Present Situation" which became known as "The 29-Point Programme", and in which he set forth the anti-Comintern course of the CPC leadership and reaffirmed the need to seize big cities and to organise strikes and uprising throughout the country.

On August 5, when the FEB received the proceedings of the August 1 and 3 meetings of the Politbureau, it sent a letter to all members of the Politbureau, the CC CPC and also to the secretary of the Communist Youth League of China. It noted that the CPC leadership had grossly misinterpreted the Comintern's instructions and insisted that its fatal course should be halted in the centre and the localities. "The proceedings at the Politbureau meetings on August 1 and 3, compel us to declare most emphatically," the letter said, "that the Chinese Communist Party faces the threat of being inveigled into a gamble."

On August 6, the ECCI Far Eastern Bureau and the Politbureau of the CPC held a joint meeting. The FEB's representative critically analysed Li Li-san's line and said that "the last two meetings of the Politbureau of the CC CPC [August 1 and 3.—A. G.] showed that there is a dangerous tendency to pursue a policy directed against the Comintern".

In view of the fact that in the first half of August the CC CPC Politbureau virtually showered the ECCI with letters and telegrams emphasising the need for an uprising and asserting that there were subjective and objective conditions for seizing power throughout the country, and furnished the ECCI with clearly overstated data about the forces of the CPC, the Red Army and organised workers and peasants, the head of the Far Eastern Bureau secretly went to Wuhan to study the situation on the spot. On August 12 and 13 he

reported to the ECCI that there was a vast number of Kuomintang troops in Wuhan, and only 200 CPC members and 150 members of the Red trade unions. In response the ECCI decided promptly to send to China members of the CPC delegation in the Comintern—members of the CC CPC Politbureau Chou En-lai and Chu Chiu-po—and authorised them to subject Li Li-san's line to criticism at the Third Plenary Meeting of the CC CPC.

In a cable to the CC CPC on August 26 the ECCI once again pointed out that it was necessary immediately to discard the plan for organising uprisings throughout the country and to terminate the realisation of Li Li-san's line. The ECCI said that "the course of events in general and the events connected with the capture and loss of Changsha, in particular, and the Red Army's operations at Hankow, showed that at present it lacked the strength to capture big cities". The cable noted that "Li Li-san does not want to reckon with the fact that so far there is no real Soviet government in the Soviet regions and no real Red Army. In other parts of the country there are still no mass actions by the proletariat in the industrial centres and no serious unrest of millions of peasant masses. Under these circumstances there are as yet no serious chances for capturing big cities". The ECCI said that it was necessary to form a Soviet government with due account for the opportunities available to the revolutionary forces "on the already captured territories".

At the end of August the ECCI pressured the CPC leadership into temporarily suspending the plan for immediate uprisings. However, the instructions to the Red Army to seize cities were not rescinded: the "leftists" intended to return to their plan if the army managed to capture a large centre. In September 1930 the army made another unsuccessful attempt to capture Wuhan and Changsha. In early October Mao Tse-tung's units withdrew from the proximity of Changsha in order to capture Kiangsi and its main centres and seized Chian, a key strategic point in the province. A Congress of Soviets of Kiangsi Province which took place in Chian on October 7 under Mao Tse-tung's chairmanship adopted a resolution saying that in order to consolidate the victory an "immediate and relentless attack on Nanchang

and Chiuchiang is necessary" and emphasised: "This is the most urgent practical task of the revolutionary masses of the whole province." The resolution stated that "the revolutionary situation in the whole world, in the whole country and in all provinces shows that the dominating classes are now on the road leading to complete destruction, disintegration and collapse.... In the course of this revolutionary upsurge (direct revolutionary situation) Soviet power will undoubtedly be created in the whole country and in the whole world."¹

In a letter of October 14, 1930 to the CC CPC Mao Tse-tung wrote that the Front Committee which he headed approved the June resolution of the CC (i.e., the resolution of June 11, 1930.—A. G.) and The 29-Point Programme in which Li Li-san's precepts found their concentrated expression. "The Front Committee," Mao Tse-tung wrote, "has passed a resolution which wholly and fully approves the instructions of the Central Committee. The Front Committee regards The 29-Point Programme as being absolutely correct."²

The Third Plenary Meeting of the CC CPC (late September 1930) did not secure a turning point in the Party's activities. In its resolution it only mentioned "individual", "tactical errors" of Li Li-san's line and asserted that the lines of the CPC leadership and the Comintern were identical on basic issues. These decisions were intended not only to save the CPC leadership's face, but also to continue the old line, if slightly modified.

At the end of October and the beginning of November the CPC leadership continued to discuss plans for the Red Army's offensive on Nanchang, Chiuchiang and Wuhan. In keeping with the precepts of the old line the leadership of the Kiangsu Province Party organisation was preparing a gen-

¹ Chu Chiu-po, "The Capture and Loss of Chian (The Influence of Comrade Li Li-san's Line on the Soviet Regions)", *Shihhua*, 1930, No. 2 (in Chinese).

² These facts prove Mao Tse-tung's claims that he "never supported Li Li-san's line, but, on the contrary, rectified with much patience the 'Left' mistakes found in the First Front Army of the Red Army" to be a falsification of the history of the CPC made with the view to glorifying his own role. (See: Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, London, 1956, p. 179.)

eral strike in the towns with the view to turning it into an armed uprising.¹ In spite of the ECCI instructions the CPC leadership did not criticise the basic errors of the leftists' platform, and some of the Party's leaders spoke out in defence of the Li Li-san line. The heaviest criticism at the plenary meeting was levelled at Wang Ming, Po Ku and other Communists who already during the propaganda of Li Li-san's precepts, the adoption of the June 11, 1930 resolution and other measures of Li Li-san and his followers, pointed out that they were wrong and harmful and anti-Comintern in nature.²

In these circumstances the ECCI in October 1930 sent a letter to the CC CPC with a detailed criticism of Li Li-san's line,³ and then, upon hearing Li Li-san's report about the state of affairs in the Party and the stand of its leadership, advised the CC CPC to convene a Fourth Plenary Meeting which would make its decisions and reorganise the Party's activity on the basis of "The ECCI Letter to the CC CPC on Li Li-san's Line". The ECCI took into consideration the tremendous harm rendered by Li Li-sanism to the Party's position in the cities, and the damage its leftist directives in the military and the agrarian and peasant questions continued to cause the Party policy in rural areas.

The Fourth Plenary Meeting of the CC CPC took place in January 1931. It analysed Li Li-san's line, underscored the inconsistent character of the decisions of the Third Plenary Meeting and passed a decision on reorganising the Party's work. It formed a new Party leadership whose nucleus consisted of Politbureau members, former CPC leaders (Chou En-lai, Hsiang Chung-fa and Chang Kuo-tao) and representatives of those forces in the Party which actively opposed Li Li-san's line in 1930 (Wang Ming, Chang Wen-tien, Wang Chia-hsiang, Po Ku and others).

The reorganisation of the CPC's work which began in the

¹ Lo Mai, "An Analysis of Li-Li san's Line in the Work in Kiangsu Province", *Shihhua*, 1937, No. 9 (February 7), p. 4 (in Chinese).

² Chen Shao-yu (Wang Ming), *Two Lines*, Yen-an, 1941, pp. 3, 68, 118 (in Chinese).

³ *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, pp. 283-90 (in Russian).

spring of 1931 on the basis of the decisions of the Fourth Plenary Meeting and the repeal of Li Li-san's directives in the Soviet regions, strengthened the latter, contributed to the growth of the Red Army, ensured its successful fight against Chiang Kai-shek's punitive campaigns, and on the whole promoted the development of the Soviet movement.

THE PROBLEMS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION IN COMINTERN AND CPC DOCUMENTS (1930-1931)

The stand of the ECCI on the CPC's strategy and tactics during the stage of the struggle which was conducted under the slogan of Soviets, took shape in the course of the revolutionary struggle in China. The most important documents were The Resolution of the ECCI on the Chinese Question (June 1930), The ECCI Letter to the CC CPC on Li Li-san's Line (October 1930) and the Resolution of the ECCI Presidium on the Tasks of the CPC (July 1931).

The Resolution of the ECCI on the Chinese Question was a milestone in the elaboration of the strategy and tactics of the Chinese revolution. It developed and specified, on the basis of the events in late 1929 and early 1930, the conclusions of the Sixth Congress of the CPC and the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.¹ Adopted almost simultaneously with the Li Li-san June 11, 1930 resolution, this ECCI document shows clearly the basic differences in the position of the ECCI and the Li Li-san leadership of the CPC.

The main new feature in the ECCI resolution was that among the forces and factors determining the development of the revolutionary process in China it gave priority to the Soviet movement and the formation of a "genuine Red Army". The Comintern's former programme principle, "the agrarian question—in the centre of the Chinese revolution", was supplemented with the thesis: "the revolution is itself

¹ When it formulated and adopted the resolution the ECCI knew nothing about the "leftist" decisions of the Conference of Representatives of Soviet Regions and the June 11, 1930 resolution of the Politbureau of the CPC Central Committee. Some assessments and propositions in the ECCI resolution, although in a very limited sense, reflected the overstated data communicated to the Comintern by the CC CPC.

developing in the form of a peasant war guided by the proletariat".¹

The section containing an assessment of the situation confirmed the assessment given in the December 1929 ECCI letter to the CC CPC, but with certain amendments which took into account the course of events. The situation was characterised as a "national crisis", and "increasing revolutionary upsurge" still in "its initial stage".²

Although the CPC leadership maintained that revolutionary upsurge was developing consistently the ECCI resolution said: "The new revolutionary surge in China is characterised by distinctive forms. It is ripening in separate regions, primarily in those where the revolution of 1925-27 has tilled the soil, and only then gradually spreads to the others. At the same time this circumstance explains the certain weakness of the movement at the initial stages of the fresh revolutionary upsurge, when the fighting masses are unable immediately to gain possession of the industrial centres and when the general balance of forces is at first unfavourable for the workers and peasants."³ The Resolution made it clear that the growth of the peasant struggle would play a decisive role in altering the general balance of forces. "This balance will change in a positive direction in the course of the subsequent development of the revolutionary struggle, when the peasant movement, guided by the proletariat, will spread to new territories."⁴

The resolution also stressed that "when analysing a given stage of the struggle it is necessary to take into account that so far a revolutionary situation does not exist in the whole of China. The waves of the workers' and peasants' movements have not yet merged. In their totality they still do not make up the necessary force capable of attacking imperialism and the Kuomintang regime. So far the revolutionary struggle of the peasants is developing successfully only in some of the Southern provinces. The splits and the struggle inside the ruling cliques of the dominating classes have not yet

¹ "The Resolution of the ECCI on the Chinese Question", *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, p. 281.

² *Ibid.*, p. 273.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

brought their complete enervation and political collapse."¹

The assessment of the prospects for the development of the crisis given in the ECCI resolution to a certain extent was influenced by the stand of the CPC leadership. "The course of events is such," it said, "that in the immediate future the revolutionary situation will spread if not across the whole of China, then at least across the territory of the decisive provinces." On the other hand, the ways of "accelerating this process" proposed by the ECCI had nothing in common with the calculations of the Li Li-san leadership that a revolutionary situation would be created as a result of "any explosion" or "an outburst of struggle in the cities", or with theories that the seizure of one or several provinces automatically signified the rise of a revolutionary situation throughout the country. The ECCI believed that the situation could be revolutionised mainly by the development and consolidation of Soviet bases and the Red Army, i.e., through the exploitation of the existing opportunities, thus putting to test the available forces, and determining the possible gains.

In this connection priority among the "Party's most important tasks" was given to two interconnected aims: the establishment of a central Soviet government and a "fully battleworthy and politically steadfast", "real" Red Army. "The Soviet movement confronts the Party with the crucially important task of setting up a Soviet government and organising its activity.... The Party must proceed from the assumption that the latter can acquire the necessary strength and significance only provided that a real Red Army, fully subordinate to the CPC leadership and capable of becoming the government's mainstay is raised in the most secure region."² The ECCI did not say that the government should under all circumstances have its seat in a big city, and considered the security of a region, i.e., protracted and firm consolidation, as the most important factor. As regards the question of seizing cities, it was formulated as follows: "It is necessary to concentrate on raising and strengthening the Red Army so as in the future, depending on the military

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 273.

³ *Ibid.*

and administrative centres."¹ This line was mainly designed to create a reliable territorial base of the revolution and its armed forces. "The Communist Party must understand that the formation of a fully battleworthy and politically steadfast Red Army in the specific conditions existing in China is an urgent task whose fulfilment will undoubtedly lead to a powerful development of the revolution."²

The economic policy of the Soviets and the future revolutionary government was linked with its basic objective: "To unite peasant actions and secure their maximum co-ordination by decisively uprooting feudalism and militarism and bridling kulak and money-lending elements."³ In this connection the resolution made the following point: "The Party should make the *solution of the agrarian question* the central issue in the Soviet areas. The agrarian revolution should not be a revolution of the kulaks, but of the poor and the middle peasantry."⁴ It, therefore, proposed "to confiscate the landed estates and the land of the churches and other large proprietors, to distribute it equally among the poor and middle peasants and not to confiscate the land of the well-to-do peasants" [i.e., the prosperous middle peasants.—A.G.]⁵ The resolution suggested that "confiscation of landed estates in favour of the peasants" should remain the central slogan, while the nationalisation of land should be preserved as a propaganda slogan which would be carried into life following "the victory of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry"⁶ The resolution also advised to "avoid premature measures", i.e., to preserve the freedom of trade, not to prohibit the purchase and sale of land, not to centralise supply, and not to regulate internal trade and prices "with the exception of special items (salt, kerosene) taking military needs into account."⁷

These recommendations were important for the CPC be-

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, p. 273.

² *Ibid.*, p. 274.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* See also: Chinese text in the collection *The Main Documents of the Comintern on the Question of the Chinese revolution*, p. 276.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

cause in 1930 the Li Li-san leadership and some local Party workers, including Mao Tse-tung, committed serious "leftist" blunders in the agrarian question. The documents recording Mao Tse-tung's policy in the agrarian and peasant question, drawn up in the regions where his units operated in 1930, prove that his position on this question was more leftist than that of Li Li-san. In the decision "On the Question of the Fight Against the Kulak" (June 1930) he argued that large groups of middle peasants (whom he characterised as the "third type of kulaks") should be included into the category of kulaks and physically exterminated.¹

The section "The Prospects of the Chinese Revolution and its Tasks" confirmed the Comintern's thesis that the Chinese revolution in the forthcoming stage would remain a bourgeois-democratic revolution, although in view of certain conditions its success "*Opens Prospects for Socialist Development*". At the same time it was underlined that during the transition to socialism the Chinese revolution "will have more intermediate stages than the October Revolution",² that "socialism is not introduced immediately and directly", that the "transition to socialism entails a number of intermediate stages" and that it was "a protracted process".³

The resolution defined the main content of the ECCI directives sent to the CC CPC in July and August 1930 in reply to cables from the Li Li-san leadership. One of the directives, cabled July 28, dealt with forming a Soviet government, the other was contained in the above-mentioned cable of August 26. "The essence of the line", representative of the Comintern's Eastern Secretariat V. Kuchumov reported to the Political Commission of the ECCI at the end of August, "was the formation of a Soviet government in a Soviet region best protected by the Red Army. The

¹ Hsiao Tso-liang, *The Land Revolution in China, 1930-1934. A Study of Documents*, Seattle and London, 1969, pp. 153-54, 159. Mao Tse-tung and some other local CPC functionaries adhered to these positions up to the spring of 1931. That explains why there were campaigns of mass suppression of the "counter-revolution" in areas where Mao Tse-tung's units operated, and the difficulties in the development of Soviet regions and the Red Army.

² *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*, p. 279.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

Soviet government formulates its programme for an agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution, proclaims it, and having a reliable territorial basis at its disposal begins to implement it; then when the territorial basis will be fully created and when the Red Army will be strengthened, it will be possible and necessary to set the task of gaining possession of one or several large industrial centres and big towns in general, which in China (as a rule) are vulnerable to a direct blow from imperialism."

The basic propositions of the August directive were incorporated into a new detailed document — the ECCI Letter to the CC CPC on Li Li-san's Line. This letter which played an important role in terminating the leftist deviation was also a milestone in formulating the problems of the Chinese revolution and the CPC's line of struggle.

In this letter the ECCI re-emphasised the danger implicit in ignoring the uneven development of the revolutionary movement in China, and the overestimation of the level of the working-class movement by Li Li-san's followers ("the proletariat is poorly organised", "the bulk of the proletariat believes that the Red Army will arrive and smash Chiang Kai-shek, and only after that the workers will be able to take action"), and frankly stated that "at present the balance of forces in the big cities is not conducive to an armed uprising".¹

The letter told the CC CPC that it was necessary "soberly to appraise the strength and the weaknesses of the Soviet movement", because "so far there is no Soviet government in China ..., the Soviet regions are still not organised and Soviet power is not consolidated. Even in the Soviet territories the agrarian revolution has not been accomplished in the sense of solving the key problems."²

Mentioning what it called a "grotesque overestimation of the armed forces of the revolution" (which according to information from the CPC leadership included five million workers, 30 million peasants, a workers' guard in each city, five million members of the Young Guard and so

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the National-Colonial Revolution. The Example of China*, pp. 284-85.

² *Ibid.*, p. 286.

forth), the ECCI said: "We still lack a real workers' and peasants' Red Army with powerful Party backbone and a command personnel consisting of workers. The Red Army's successes are enormous, its growth and heroic exploits command the admiration of the entire international proletariat, but it is still a weak and inadequately organised Red Army and is not sufficiently controlled by the CPC.... Former soldiers of militarist armies comprise the majority in many armies.... It is also impermissible to ignore the Red Army's military and technical weakness." The ECCI's conclusion was that "the seizure of major cities, a frontal attack on the modern imperialist armies or a march on the major centres are still beyond the capacity of the Red Army".¹ On the basis of an analysis of the situation in China the ECCI reappraised the movement's main objectives and said that "building of a real Red Army"² was one of its most urgent tasks.

Taking into consideration that the working-class movement lagged behind the development of the peasants' struggle and that imperialism and reaction held fairly strong positions in China's industrial and administrative centres, the ECCI in its letter concerning the Li Li-san line repeated the point which it made in its July and August directives: "It is necessary to develop a peasant movement in the non-Soviet regions, launch a guerrilla struggle there, and surround the cities, both the big ones and the biggest, with a ring of peasant disturbances..."³

It trained special attention on the danger of anti-Comintern, essentially nationalistic, sentiments, on the danger for the CPC in counterposing its objectives and policy to the Comintern, the centre of the international communist movement, using the "theories of national exclusiveness" as a pretext.⁴

In the spring and summer of 1931 the specific development of the revolutionary forces in China and the need further to strengthen the Soviet regions in the face of the intensified attacks by the reactionaries prompted the ECCI

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

to pass a series of new decisions on the Chinese question. A situation unprecedented in revolutionary movements had taken shape in China by that time. In contrast to the CPC's weak positions in the cities, which were further undermined by Li Li-san's policy, its revolutionary bases and armed forces in the rural areas continued to strengthen and develop. The rectification of leftist errors in the military and the agrarian and peasant questions, the promotion of military development and political work in the army, and the determined efforts to organise the masses in the Soviet regions, enabled the Red Army to repulse the punitive campaigns of the Kuomintang administration.

In the spring and summer of 1931 the Comintern and the CPC adopted documents further rectifying the CPC's line of struggle and concentrating the main efforts of the Party on raising Red Army units and establishing Soviet regions.

The Eleventh Plenum of the ECCI (March 25 to April 13, 1931) pursued the line set forth in the ECCI Resolution on the Chinese Question of June 1930 and defined a new approach to the role of the Soviets and the Red Army in the revolutionary process in China. It made the following point: "The further development of the Soviet movement in China ... is linked up with the expansion and consolidation of the territorial base of the Soviets and the Red Army."¹ The Plenum authorised the ECCI Presidium to draw up a comprehensive resolution concerning the CPC's tasks at the time on the basis of this premise.

The July 1931 resolution, just as the ECCI Resolution on the Chinese Question of June 1930, characterised the revolutionary process in China as "a peasant war under proletarian leadership".² At the same time it gave what in many respects was a new definition of the role played by the revolutionary army. Taking into consideration the actual state of the revolutionary forces in town and country and the fact that "the whole regime of the bourgeois-landowner

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 11, No. 22, April 27, 1931, p. 413.

² "Resolution of the Presidium of the ECCI on the Tasks of the CPC", *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the National Colonial Revolution. The Example of China*, p. 296.

counter-revolution largely rests on the military suppression of the peasants by the forces of imperialism and militarism", the ECCI Presidium formulated a conclusion which designated the CPC's central task in the new conditions: "The workers' and peasants' Red Army led by Communists, naturally, turns into a centre of assembly and cohesion and a lever for the entire revolutionary movement ... and the main form of struggle for the overthrow of the Kuomintang."¹

Three tasks faced the CPC: "1) to build up and strengthen the Red Army by gaining firm possession of the territorial base and securing its further expansion; 2) to form a central Soviet government and strengthen Soviet power which consistently implements the main slogans of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution on the territory under its control; 3) to promote a mass revolutionary struggle, peasant movements and particularly workers' strikes in the non-Soviet territories, and at the same time do its best to strengthen and broaden the revolutionary trade union movement."² The resolution also underscored that the CPC's work in towns should be concentrated in the first place on the first two tasks. "*All Party organisations* [my italics—A. G.] should direct their attention on further expanding the Soviet regions, establishing a closer militant alliance between the working-class and peasant movements, and co-ordinating the revolutionary struggle in the non-Soviet territories with the operations of the workers' and peasants' Red Army."³ "The most urgent task at the moment is to strengthen and consolidate the Red Army, secure the cohesion of all units of the Red Army and make sure that it has the support of the entire mass of workers and peasants..."⁴

In this connection the resolution set forth an urgent task of forming a Central Soviet Government.⁵ The document included detailed recommendations concerning the formation of the Red Army (organisation of political work, improve-

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

ment of its social composition, increasing the number of Party and Communist Youth members in it, universal military training of the young people, enrollment of workers in the army through the trade unions, improvement of military training),¹ diverse aspects of social and economic policy and the organisation of work with the masses. The future Soviet government was advised "to pursue a Bolshevik nationality policy with respect to the national minorities on the basis of their complete equality and right to self-determination".²

The resolution stressed again and again that the CPC had to develop its work among the masses and get rid of its inherent "domineering" attitude to the masses by expediting formation of groups of poor peasants in the Soviets and other measures. "The Soviet state," the document said, "should derive its authority from the direct initiative of the popular masses at the grass roots level."³

In general all the measures recommended in the resolution were designed to create a reliable mass base for the development of the Red Army, to shift from a regime of military control on the territories held by the Red Army to building bases for the army and Soviet which could provide material resources and personnel for the armed forces of the CPC and set a revolutionising example for the working people in the non-Soviet regions. On the basis of these decisions the CC CPC in August 1931 worked out drafts of the main laws for the forthcoming First Congress of Representatives of Soviet Regions, and in September the CC CPC Bureau of the Central Soviet Region framed the key questions of the further reorganisation of the bases and the Red Army. The realisation of these decisions after the First Congress of Chinese Soviets in November 1931 ushered in a new phase in the Soviet movement.

On the whole, the purpose of these decisions and measures of the Comintern and the CPC was to shift the emphasis in the work of the *whole Party* on the development of the Red Army and Soviet bases. Under the conditions which

¹ *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern...*

² *Ibid.*, pp. 306-307.

³ *Ibid.*

existed at the time this was tantamount to transferring the Party's main efforts to the country's rural regions.¹

* * *

Thanks to the line formulated in the documents of the Comintern and the CPC between 1927 and 1931 the CPC not only survived the defeat of the revolution of 1925-27 and the ensuing offensive of the reaction, but also managed to build up its own armed forces and seats of revolutionary power. One of the decisive factors which forced the Kuomintang to reverse its policy of liquidating the CPC and agree to form a united front against Japanese imperialism was the fact that the CPC managed to build up its own armed forces and establish Soviet regions (alongside effective political pressure of the USSR on the Kuomintang).

As the struggle continued it became clear that the regrouping of the class forces which began in China following the intensification of Japanese aggression made it necessary to modify a range of propositions and, above all, to reconsider the role of the national bourgeoisie and intermediate forces.

The course for setting up Soviet centres and raising the Red Army was an essential tactical stage at which the CPC created conditions for the formation of a new united front. At the same time the experience of the struggle showed that with the existing level of the mass movement and balance of class forces, the policy of Sovietising the whole of China (the slogan "the Soviets alone will save China") was impracticable at the given stage. In formulating its strategy and tactics the CPC had to take into account that the conditions for the hegemony of the proletariat could appear only in the course of a relatively long stage of the national liberation revolution of a united national front.

¹ These facts and documents expose the insolvency of the assertions made by Maoist and pro-Maoist bourgeois historians that the line of promoting the development of the Chinese revolution in the rural regions, the course of surrounding towns with the revolutionary villages and the policy in the agrarian, peasant and military questions were worked out by Mao Tse-tung "personally" and moreover in the course of his struggle against the erroneous precepts of the then CPC leadership and the Comintern.

This was not appreciated immediately, and not only owing to sectarian and dogmatic ideas.¹ Right up to 1936 the Kuomintang waged an armed struggle against the CPC. Both the opposition groups in the Kuomintang and other intermediate forces adhered to anti-communist positions. Under these conditions the prospect for the formation of a united front at "the top" was out of the question both theoretically and practically.

Aware of the need to establish a united anti-imperialist front the ECCI searched for ways to broaden the circle of the CPC's allies. On the basis of the decisions of the Twelfth Plenum (September 1932) the ECCI advised the CPC to consider and implement the tactic of forming a "united front at the bottom". At the suggestion of the Comintern in early 1933 the CPC leadership took a further step in this direction, publishing a declaration offering all military and political groupings to conclude an agreement on united action against the Japanese aggressors on three conditions: termination of the campaign against the revolutionary bases, granting democratic freedoms to the people and arming the people. However, the course of forming a "united front at the bottom" proved inadequate, it narrowed the opportunities for broadening the CPC's influence. It dragged the Party into a struggle on two fronts — against the Kuomintang and against imperialism. In view of the mounting Japanese aggression, the accent on overthrowing the Kuomintang, which controlled by far the biggest part of China,

¹ The approach to the question of the rates of development and prospects of the revolutionary struggle in China was influenced by a general overestimation of the impact of the world economic crisis on the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependencies. It found its reflection in a fresh wave of leftist tendencies in 1931-34 in the CPC leadership, which overestimated the crisis of the Kuomintang regime and, consequently, the potential of the revolutionary forces. Under the impact of these and other factors (including the growing Stalin personality cult) in 1931-33 some documents and decisions of the ECCI (decisions of the 11th, 12th and 13th plenums) and the resolutions of the CC CPC began to display a definite trend towards the assertion of a number of erroneous, sectarian evaluations and directives (sectarian attitude to the intermediate strata, incorrect evaluation of the situation in China as being a "revolutionary upsurge" in 1931, and then a "nation-wide revolutionary crisis" in 1932, and a "direct revolutionary situation" in 1933).

offered the pretext, which the Kuomintang did not miss, to slander the CPC as an anti-national force.

The formulation of questions relating to the Soviet movement which the Comintern and the CPC continued in 1931-34, the ECCI advice on matters of military development and the strategy and tactics of the Red Army, and on the agrarian policy played an important part in strengthening the army and the revolutionary bases. Four punitive campaigns by Chiang Kai-shek's superior forces were repulsed between 1930 and 1933. The Soviet regions and the Soviet government of China became an important factor of the country's political life. Already in 1933 some groups opposing the Nanking regime looked upon the CPC with its Red Army as a potential ally in the struggle against Japanese aggression and the capitulatory tendencies of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang. It was this circumstance that prompted the command of the 19th Army in Fuchian in 1933 to approach the Chinese Soviets with a proposal to conclude an agreement on joint operations against Chiang Kai-shek in order to resist Japan. But the sectarian and dogmatic trends and feelings which were strong in the CPC leadership deprived the Party of its possible allies, limited its influence and led to the isolation of the Soviet regions.

The CPC's experience in the first half of the 1930s demanded that it should make a turn in its policy and work for the establishment of a united front. The Party did so after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. The new guidelines which were elaborated by the ECCI and CPC representatives in furtherance of the decisions of the Seventh Congress paved the way for turning the CPC into a truly mass, all-China Party, and laid the foundations for a course which placed the CPC at the head of the victorious Chinese revolution.

This course was elaborated with account for the entire preceding experience of the CPC, and in the first place its successes and failures in establishing Soviet bases and raising the Red Army and in organising a united front. It is important to note that it would be a gross mistake to think that the experience of the Soviet movement was merely "material" for formulating a new course and, moreover,

chiefly negative material as bourgeois and Maoist historians portray it.¹

Adopted on the basis of the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern the CPC's new guidelines not only took into consideration the positive and the negative experience of the preceding years but also further developed a range of valuable theoretical and practical decisions made in the period of the Soviet movement. An attentive and unprejudiced student will easily discern, particularly in the above-mentioned decisions of the ECCI and the CPC in the period between 1928 and 1931, outline recommendations and in some questions comprehensive recommendations which became part and parcel of the CPC's political arsenal and crucial components of its line in the periods 1937-45 and 1945-49 (establishment of its own armed forces, formulation of questions of military development, the experience of the agrarian revolution, the idea of "surrounding towns with a ring of peasant uprisings", directives concerning the economic policy in the Soviet regions, and methods and forms of organising the masses).

Finally, it is absolutely clear that the CPC's new orientation adopted between 1935 and 1937 would have failed to produce such swift and positive results without the experience of establishing Soviet bases, without the formation of the Red Army and the creation of the backbone of Party-political and military cadres of the CPC.

¹ Bourgeois historians refer to the defeat of the Soviet movement to justify their concept of the responsibility of the Comintern for all the setbacks sustained by the CPC. In effect echoing the assertions of bourgeois writers, Maoist historiography claims that the Soviet regions were defeated because the then CPC leadership and the ECCI did not pursue Mao Tse-tung's "correct" course which had already been fully elaborated at the time. It is common knowledge that already at the end of the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s Mao Tse-tung's supporters attempted to ascribe all credit for formulating the Party's policy after 1935 to Mao Tse-tung alone. With this view in the course of the "campaign for the rectification of style" in 1941-45 and in the official "Decisions on Some Questions of the CPC History" they tried to cancel the experience and the decisions of the CPC and the ECCI during the Soviet movement.

THE COMINTERN AND THE UNITED NATIONAL ANTI-JAPANESE FRONT IN CHINA (1935-1943)

K. V. KUKUSHKIN

THE COMINTERN AND THE CPC UNITED NATIONAL ANTI-JAPANESE FRONT TACTICS

In determining its united national anti-Japanese front policy the Communist Party of China was greatly influenced by the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

During the Congress the CPC representatives in the ECCI on August 1, 1935 drew up an "Appeal to the People to Rebuff Japan and Save the Country". This important document was studied and approved by the ECCI. The CC CPC and the Central Chinese Soviet Government published this Appeal in which the CPC for the first time called upon all parties and political groups to "stop the civil war in order to mobilise the country's entire might (manpower reserves, material and financial resources and armed forces) for the sacred cause of resisting Japan and saving the country".¹ The important thing about this document was that it envisaged the involvement in a joint struggle of the Kuomintang army as a whole or at least those of its units which were prepared to enter the war against the aggressors. The Appeal said: "If only the Kuomintang troops stop their offensive operations against the Chinese Red Army or if any unit joins the anti-Japanese war, the Red Army will not only immediately terminate all hostilities but will be ready to fight shoulder to shoulder with them in an effort to save the homeland".

The CPC proposed concrete organisational forms of a united anti-Japanese front: a national defence government and a united anti-Japanese army. "The Communist Party expresses its readiness immediately to begin talks on the

¹ *Materials on the History of the Chinese Revolution*, Vol. III, Peking, 1957, p. 142.

question of establishing a national defence government with all political parties, groups and organisations, with prominent scientists and political figures, and with all local military and administrative bodies desiring to join the cause of resisting Japan and saving the homeland."¹

The united anti-Japanese army was to be formed out of all military units that declared their readiness to resist Japan. The plan was to set up a united command under the leadership of the national defence government. "The Red Army," stated the declaration, "will undoubtedly be the first to join this united army in order to fulfil its sacred duty in the struggle against the Japanese invaders, for the salvation of the homeland."²

The CPC also drafted a ten-point programme of the national defence government whose basic principles were armed resistance against Japanese aggression and the return of all occupied territories; confiscation of all property of Japanese imperialism in China; confiscation of all land and property owned by traitors and Japanese agents; improvement of the material position of workers, peasants, soldiers and the intelligentsia; the granting of democratic rights to the people; liberation of all political prisoners, etc.

The August 1, 1935 Appeal of the Communist Party of China was the first important step in the implementation of the new tactics to form a united national front. In general it envisaged the formation of a broad anti-Japanese front of all political parties, groups and representatives of different classes and social strata who were prepared to wage a joint struggle against the aggressors. It attested to the fact that the CPC had seriously started to elaborate a strategic and tactical line consistent with the conditions of the national liberation struggle against the Japanese invaders.

The CPC's new tactics differed substantially from the old, which had envisaged the establishment of a united front only "at the bottom" (joint actions of workers, peasants, soldiers, etc.), or, at best, the conclusion of agreements with individual political groups for a joint struggle against the Nanking government and the Japanese aggressors

¹ *Materials on the History...*, pp. 142-43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 142.

(which were made contingent on the termination of the campaign against the Soviet regions, the granting of democratic rights to the people and the arming of the people). Between 1931 and 1935 the CPC based its tactics on the assumption of an inevitable fight on two fronts — against the bourgeois-landowner Kuomintang and the Japanese invaders. The Party believed that the success of the struggle against the Japanese aggressors depended on the overthrow of the Kuomintang. But owing to the left-sectarian directives of the CPC leadership even this policy of a limited united front was not consistently pursued.

The turning point arrived only after CPC representatives took part in the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. At this Congress the head of the Chinese delegation, ECCI member Wang Ming (Chen Shao-yu) delivered a report entitled "The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries and the Tactics of the Communist Parties".¹

In the section on China, he outlined the main propositions of the Appeal of August 1, 1935. "Our tactics must consist in that jointly with the Soviet Government of China we make the proposal to the entire Chinese people, to all parties, groups, troops, mass organisations, and all prominent political and social leaders that they participate jointly with us in organising an All-Chinese united people's government of national defence."² On August 25-27, immediately after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, the Chinese delegation held a meeting in Moscow at which the problem of the formation of a united front in China was examined from all angles. A detailed report was delivered by Wang Ming. Its main points were set forth in the article "The Struggle for an Anti-Imperialist United Front and the Immediate Tasks of the Communist Party of China".

In formulating its new tactics the CPC took into account, first, the deep national political crisis in China (caused by the unceasing aggression of Japanese imperialism, the Nanking government's capitulatory policy and the Kuomintang's

¹ *The Communist International*, Vol. XII, September 20, 1935, Nos. 17-18, pp. 1323-33.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1328.

war against the Red Army and the Soviet regions) and, second, the weakness of the Red Army and the Soviets. "The Red Army alone," wrote Wang Ming, "is not formidable enough to defeat Japanese imperialism and its agents, while from the point of view of the political outlook, there are still considerable sections of the population that are not yet free from the influence of other governmental authorities, other parties and groupings, and are not yet adherents of the Soviets today."¹ Among these other parties the Kuomintang was the biggest and the most influential.

The CPC's new tactics took into account that the national crisis altered the alignment of class forces. In this connection the CPC had to undertake the urgent task of drawing into the national liberation struggle "the widest possible circles not only of truly revolutionary, class-conscious and honest elements, but also of allies and temporary supporters from among different strata and classes of Chinese society, even those that are temporarily wavering".²

Although Wang Ming confirmed that in the situation which prevailed in China at the time the revolutionary forces had to struggle against "Japanese imperialism and the Nanking government," he called Japanese imperialism the main enemy of the Chinese people. Moreover, he did not rule out the possibility of forming a united front with Chiang Kai-shek provided that he would "in deed end the war against the Red Army and turn his weapons against the Japanese imperialists".³

Left-sectarian feelings among the CPC leadership were the main obstacle for the new tactical line. As a result, after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, the CPC, as Wang Ming noted, still did not consider that the policy of the united anti-imperialist front was the chief tactical weapon and did not link it up with the Party's policy in all spheres of work and struggle.⁴ Therefore he raised the question of modifying the policy of the CPC and the Soviet

¹ *The Communist International*, Vol. XIII, February, 1936, Special Number, pp. 113, 114.

² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³ *The Communist International*, 1935, Nos. 33-34, p. 16 (in Russian).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Government of China in the agrarian question, in commercial and industrial activity and in the field of political administration and the social composition of the Red Army. It was only a question of taking initial measures to revise CPC policy in order to bring it in conformity with the tactics of the united national anti-Japanese front.

In December 1935 the CC CPC Politbureau drew up a detailed resolution on the united front in China, which was based on the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, and the materials of the conference of the Chinese delegation, particularly on Wang Ming's report. On the whole, the resolution correctly analysed the domestic political situation in China. "The main feature of the contemporary situation," it said, "is that after capturing four North-eastern provinces of China, Japanese imperialism has begun to take over Northern China with the view to subsequently occupying the whole of China and turning it from a semi-colony of different imperialist powers into its own colony." The resolution pointed out: "Waverings and splits have increased in the counter-revolutionary camp; a section of the bourgeoisie, many kulaks and small landowners and even part of the warlords may assume the position of well-wishing neutrality or even join the new national movement now under way. The front of the national revolution has broadened."¹

Taking into account the changes in the alignment of the class forces the CPC adopted the tactics of organising "broadest united anti-Japanese national front (both at the bottom and at the top)". It set itself the task of bringing together in a united front not only the main forces of the revolution (workers, peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie), but also all possible allies, including the national bourgeoisie and even some of the warlords.

There were several large militarist groups in the ruling Kuomintang camp. The most powerful of them both militarily and politically was the Nanking group of the Kuomintang headed by Chiang Kai-shek which was involved in a struggle with other militarist cliques for political influence

¹ "Resolution of the CC CPC on the Contemporary Situation and the Tasks of the Party", *Materials on the History of the Chinese Revolution*, Vol. III, p. 148.

in the country. Some of the warlords who had lost their territorial base as a result of the Japanese aggression, the Commander of the Northeastern Army Chang Hsueh-liang, for example, were seriously disenchanted with Chiang Kai-shek's capitulatory policy. The resolution instructed the Communists to make the most of the contradictions in the ruling camp of the big bourgeoisie and landowners and to take into account that the struggle between the imperialist powers in China had resulted in the emergence of rival militarist cliques. "The Party has to exploit the contradictions and clashes between these cliques and do its utmost to get at least part of the counter-revolutionary forces to abstain from active measures against the anti-Japanese front for the time being."¹

The CPC regarded the government of national defence and the united anti-Japanese army as the broadest and highest form of political organisation of the united front. It put forward the ten-point programme proclaimed in the Appeal of August 1, 1935 as a general political platform for the united front.

In pursuance of its new tactical line the CPC decided to transform the Soviet Republic into a Soviet People's Republic. Accordingly certain changes were to be introduced into the policy of the Soviet Government (termination of the confiscation of land and property of the kulaks who did not resort to feudal forms of exploiting the peasants, provision of more favourable conditions for the national bourgeoisie to initiate enterprise, etc.). The Soviet People's Government granted all political rights (including the right to participate in bodies of power) to representatives of the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia whatever their social origin (landowners, kulaks, national bourgeoisie), and to all soldiers and officers (independent of their rank) who opposed the Japanese aggressors and traitors.² The resolution pointed out that sectarianism was the main source of danger for the Party in the period when it employed the tactics of the united national front.

"The ability to work among the lower social strata of the masses, although very important, is inadequate. It is

¹ *Materials on the History...*, p. 151.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56.

necessary to learn to work with the leadership of all other political parties and groupings which may be in a position to influence the masses. Our Party must be ready for talks, compromises and agreements in order to win over the active members of the other parties to its side.... The Communists must work actively among the peasants, soldiers, the poor, the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia, among all the allies of the revolution. The Communists must fight for the vital interests of these masses and imbue them with confidence that the Communist Party represents not only the interests of the working class, but also the interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people, the interests of the whole nation."¹

The decision of the CC CPC to work for a united national anti-Japanese front was an important step towards the elaboration of a new tactical line of the CPC.

The shift to the new tactics was both timely and vitally important for the CPC. The military defeat of the Soviet movement in the south of the country, seriously depleted the forces of the Party and the Red Army. The CPC was left with only 30,000 members and the strength of the Red Army was approximately the same. The only remaining Soviet stronghold on the border of the backward Shensi and Kansu provinces with scanty material resources was surrounded by Kuomintang troops who outnumbered the Red Army many times over. Party organisations in other parts of the country were routed. In these circumstances the CPC would be able to exist and develop only if the Kuomintang stopped its war against the Red Army and if all the patriotic forces united against the Japanese aggressors.

But the decision of the CC CPC Politbureau was not without serious contradictions in its interpretation of the basic principles of the united front tactics. On the one hand, the CPC planned to draw all possible allies, including militaristic groups, into the united front, and, on the other, ruled out even the prospect of Chiang Kai-shek's Nanking Kuomintang group ever changing its stand and rebuffing Japan, regarding both it and the Japanese invaders as the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

main enemies of the Chinese people. The resolution stated that "the Party's tactical line should consist in mobilising, uniting and organising the revolutionary forces of the whole country, of the entire nation against the main enemy at the present stage—Japanese imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek, the chief of the national traitors."¹

Although correctly assessing the counter-revolutionary nature of Chiang Kai-shek's policy towards the CPC and the Red Army, the CPC leadership failed to take into account that there were significant differences between the Nanking group and the Japanese militarists which grew more and more acute as the Japanese continued their aggression. It was therefore a left-sectarian error to put the Nanking Kuomintang group on the same plane with the Japanese militarists.

There were also right opportunistic blunders in the resolution. Thus the section "Expansion and Consolidation of the Party" contained the very dangerous proposition that all who "want to fight for the Communist Party's principles whatever their social origin" should be admitted to Party membership. The resolution noted that "the Party is not afraid that some careerists may penetrate its ranks", and that it was "not afraid of the different political level of those of its members who came from the non-proletarian strata," because it would "raise them to the level of the vanguard through communist education".² In practical terms such an approach to enrollment in the Party meant that the proletarian elements, which were very insignificant as it were, would be swallowed up by the peasant and petty-bourgeois mass. Beginning with 1928 the backward rural areas became the centre of CPC activity. Towards the end of 1935, when the above resolution was adopted, the Party had become almost wholly a peasant organisation. Now it flung open its doors to representatives of the rich peasants, kulaks, petty landowners, Kuomintang army officers, artisans, students, petty-bourgeois intellectuals, etc. The Party's leadership, therefore, was bound to be formed of kulak, landowner petty-bourgeois and even bourgeois elements, because almost all the poor and middle peasants were illite-

¹ *Materials on the History...*, p. 150.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 163-64.

rate. This created a serious threat of the CPC degenerating into a petty-bourgeois party both in terms of its social composition and its ideology and policy.

The ECCI criticised these erroneous directives of the CC CPC. It was seriously concerned about the decision to admit all applicants to Party membership regardless of their social origin, and insisted that it was necessary to strengthen the CPC's proletarian nucleus. The further course of events showed that the Comintern was right, its fears for the future of the Communist Party of China were well-founded.

After the Seventh Congress of the Comintern the CPC's practical efforts to build up a united national front, its call to end the civil war and repulse the Japanese aggressors, and the programme of the government of national defence did much to stimulate the national liberation movement in the country. In that period all the main slogans advanced by the CPC were supported by representatives of various social classes (workers, peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia). All major actions of the revolutionary and democratic forces in China took place under these slogans.

In December 1935 the struggle of the students, men of arts and letters and other public circles for the salvation of homeland assumed extensive proportions. A broad anti-Japanese movement got under way which showed that the most diverse sections of the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia had gone over to the side of the revolution and that there were fresh vacillations in the bourgeois-landowner camp.

By the summer of 1936 the anti-Japanese movement spread throughout Kuomintang China: an All-China Student Union and an All-China National Salvation League consisting of workers, urban petty-bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and the national bourgeoisie were formed. This was an indication that a united national front was gradually being established. The CPC was connected with the leadership of these patriotic organisations and influenced their activity, programme and slogans. The League's slogans—"End the civil war and give a united rebuff to the invaders", "Democratic rights for the people" and others—became popular among broad circles of Chinese society.

THE COMINTERN'S STRUGGLE AGAINST LEFT-SECTARIAN ERRORS IN THE CPC UNITED FRONT POLICY

The CPC's tactical line of building up a united national front was not consistent to the end. It was not easy for the Chinese Communists to switch abruptly from an agrarian revolution and nine years of civil war to the policy for a united national anti-Japanese front. There were many people even among the leadership who, as Wang Ming wrote, "have not yet thoroughly grasped what it means to apply the united front tactics in practice".¹

Another factor which made itself felt was that the Comintern and the CPC had not fully studied such problems as the prospects of the Soviet movement and the agrarian revolution during the struggle for the united front. It is necessary to take into account that at its Seventh Congress the Comintern lacked full information concerning the Soviet movement in China and the CPC's armed forces. The Red Army was still far from completing its drive. Therefore the resolution of the Seventh Congress defined only the general trend of the revolutionary process in China. It pointed out that "the extension of the Soviet movement and the strengthening of the fighting power of the Red Army must be combined with the development of the people's anti-imperialist movement all over the country".²

Later, in its recommendation to the CPC, the Comintern amended and specified this proposition of the resolution of the Seventh Congress, indicating that it was necessary to strengthen the mass anti-Japanese movement, invigorate work among the Kuomintang Army and bring the policy of the Soviets in line with the united front tactics. At the same time the Comintern still believed at the time that the development of the movement for a united front would also help expand and strengthen the Soviets. In actual fact, however, these two processes were incompatible. The unpreparedness of the masses in the north to join the Soviets

¹ *The Communist International*, Vol. XIII, No. 5, London, 1936, p. 306.

² *The Communist International*, Vol. XII, Nos. 17-18, London, 1935, p. 956.

made it practically impossible to extend the movement at the time.

In these circumstances adventurism and sectarianism, particularly rash actions of the Red Army Command against the Kuomintang troops, constituted the main danger for the CPC. They could only lead to expansion of the civil war, to heavy losses for the Red Army and frustration of a united front.

Nevertheless at the beginning of 1936 Mao Tse-tung and his group imposed upon the CC CPC Politbureau an unrealistic plan of extending the Soviet movement in the northern (Suiyuan—Chahar) and eastern (Shansi) directions. The Red Army's drive into Shansi Province in February-April 1936 was part of the so-called strategic plan of Mao Tse-tung. Although it was announced that the purpose of the drive to the east was "to rebuff the Japanese invaders", the main blow in fact was directed against the Kuomintang Army. All this aggravated the political situation in the country and extended the scope to the civil war. The Red Army suffered heavy casualties and had to retreat. Chiang Kai-shek dispatched additional forces to throw a blockade around Ningsia, the border area of the Shensi and Kansu provinces. This created a critical situation in the Soviet region. It was necessary to prevent the further spread of the civil war, get the Kuomintang leadership and the commands of the advancing armies to agree to negotiate a truce with the CPC and then terminate the civil war.

Finding themselves in a difficult situation the Government of the Chinese Soviet People's Republic and the Military Revolutionary Council of the Red Army on May 5 sent a cable calling on the Military Committee of the Nanking Government, all armed forces and all parties, groups and organisations to end the civil war. The Soviet Government of China and the Command of the Chinese Red Army declared that they were prepared "within a month to end hostilities and reach a peace settlement with all troops fighting against the anti-Japanese Red Army". The cable said that the immediate task was to end the civil war "in the first place in the Shansi, Kansu and Shensi provinces".¹

¹ *Materials on the History of the Chinese Revolution*, Vol. III, p. 167.

Shortly afterwards a CPC representative began armistice talks with Nanking Government representatives, but the desired results were not achieved. At the same time the negotiations between the CPC and the commands of the Kuomintang's Northeastern and Northwestern armies which were blockading the Soviet regions were proceeding successfully. Among other things this was due to powerful anti-Japanese feelings among the soldiers and officers in these armies. Subsequently, the negotiations resulted in the conclusion of an armistice agreement. Moreover, at the time Chiang Kai-shek's attention was temporarily focused on events in the southwest of China where in June 1936 the warlords in Kwantung and Kwangsi began military operations against him. Chiang Kai-shek was compelled to transfer a large army to the south and temporarily suspend military operations against the Red Army in the northwest.

The improvement in the military situation of the Soviet region and a flare up of internal struggle in the ruling camp, produced a resurgence of adventuristic feeling in the CPC leadership. It seriously banked on the operations of the warlords in the southwest of China and tried to exploit this circumstance to intensify the struggle against Chiang Kai-shek's Nanking group. In a resolution "The Contemporary Political Situation" of June 13, 1936, the CC CPC not only failed to expose the anti-popular militarist nature of the war of the southwestern warlords, but, on the contrary, characterised it as a war "possessing a degree of national revolutionary significance".¹ "This war," said the resolution, "is directed against the chief national traitor Chiang Kai-shek. In the current situation war against the Japanese invaders is inseparable from war against Chiang Kai-shek." Proceeding in essence from the formal premise that the southwestern warlords had gone into action against Chiang Kai-shek, the CC CPC drew the far-reaching conclusion that it would be possible to form an alliance with this military grouping. "We must encourage, support and expand this war, so as by mobilising all the forces opposing the Japanese invaders and national traitors ... create a government of

¹ "CC CPC Resolution on the Contemporary Political Situation" (June 13, 1936), Hatano Keniti, *History of the Communist Party of China. Review of Sources*, Vol. 6, Tokyo, 1961, pp. 231-40.

national defence and an anti-Japanese united army, with the Soviet People's Republic and the anti-Japanese Red Army as their pivot."¹

At the same time the CPC leadership intended to set up a Northwestern United Anti-Japanese Army together with the armies of Chiang Hsueh-liang and Yan Hu-chen. Thus the CPC leadership calculated to strike at Chiang Kai-shek's army from the north and south mainly with the help of the warlords. Obviously enough, this plan, which betrayed the left-sectarian deviation of the CPC leadership, by no means contributed to the unity of all the forces of the nation in the struggle against the Japanese aggressors. In effect it was a short cut to civil war and the Japanese militarists would have definitely taken advantage of it. It would have inevitably frustrated the united national front tactics against the imperialist war.

The activity of the southwestern clique clearly showed that the plans of the CPC leadership were very dangerous indiscretion. The southern warlords had no intention of repulsing Japan. They turned down the CPC's proposal to set up a united government of national defence and implement an anti-Japanese democratic programme. They also rejected the proposal for a bloc with other anti-Japanese organisations and groups. The southwestern warlords quickly came to terms with Chiang Kai-shek in exchange for certain concessions and promises.

Thus, the CPC leadership led by Mao Tse-tung, once again erroneously concentrating on an armed and political struggle against Chiang Kai-shek instead of the Japanese aggressors, came out in support of an ordinary reactionary militarist war. This basically contradicted the ECCI line of forming a united anti-Japanese front.

Modern Chinese historiography, taking its cue from Mao Tse-tung, asserts that on May 5, 1936, the day when Mao Tse-tung and the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army Chu Teh cabled the Military Council of the Nanking Government, the CPC shelved the slogan "Down with Chiang Kai-shek" and allegedly adopted the tactics of pressuring Chiang Kai-shek into taking part in anti-Japanese war. One of the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

means of the "pressure" was allegedly the policy of uniting "with all the other groups in the Kuomintang and their troops". The Chinese historian Ho Kan-chih wrote in this connection: "Having adopted this course the Party decided not to patronise any of the hostile sides in the conflict which began at the time in the Kuomintang itself" (the war between the Nanking and the Kwantung groups).¹ The content of the CC CPC resolution of June 13 fully overturns these false conclusions of the Maoist historians. It was not Mao Tse-tung and his supporters who were responsible for the further changes in the CPC's tactical line, but the Comintern and the proponents of its line in the CPC leadership.

In the summer of 1936, the Comintern analysed the almost year-long efforts of the CPC to implement the tactics of the united national anti-Japanese front, the most important CPC decisions and documents and also the changes in the country's domestic political situation. It disclosed the mistakes which were made by the Party and introduced serious corrections into the united front policy.

Approving on the whole the CPC's political line, the Comintern emphasised the need to correct and develop certain basic premises in the united front tactics, and surmount left-sectarian and right opportunistic blunders.²

In an article marking the fifteenth anniversary of the CPC, Georgi Dimitrov wrote: "There are also internal difficulties in the path of the Communist Party of China. It has to overcome the resistance of sectarian elements, who do not understand that in the present conditions the only way to secure the liberation of the Chinese people is by establishing a united national front against the Japanese violators. It also has to carry on a struggle against the opportunist capitulators who are ready to sacrifice the political and organisational independence of the Party and

¹ See: Ho Kan-chih, *The History of the Contemporary Chinese Revolution*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 338-39 (in Russian).

² The Comintern's most important recommendations found their reflection in a programme article by Wang Ming "Fifteen Years of Struggle for the Independence and Freedom of the Chinese People", *The Communist International*, Vol. XIII, No. 9, London, 1936, pp. 581-93.

the Red Army, and to dissolve them in other organisations."¹

The Comintern explained to the CPC the need to reconsider its policy towards the Kuomintang as a whole and the Nanking Kuomintang group of Chiang Kai-shek in particular. The Comintern made the conclusion that the CPC's policy of fighting the Kuomintang headed by Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese aggressors at one and the same time was politically incorrect. It emphasised: "The Communists should not place the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek in the same category as the Japanese plunderers, since the Japanese fascist military clique are the main enemy of the Chinese people, and it is the struggle against them to which everything must be subordinated at the present stage. In addition, we cannot regard the whole of the Kuomintang and all its troops as allies and hirelings of Japanese imperialism. It is clear to the Chinese Communist Party that a real and serious armed resistance to the Japanese plunderers requires the participation in it of the Kuomintang troops or the decisive majority of them."²

The Communist Party of China therefore had to set its sights on ending the hostilities between the Red Army and Chiang Kai-shek and work out an agreement with him for a joint struggle against the Japanese invaders. From the point of view of politics, according to the Comintern, "the establishment of a united national front in China must concretely be expressed in the conclusion of a political agreement between the Communist Party, Kuomintang and other organisations on the basis of a general platform of struggle against the Japanese violators, while preserving full political and organisational independence".³

In order to unite the whole country for the struggle against the Japanese aggressors the CPC had to oppose energetically the discord between various groupings inside the Kuomintang. In this connection the Comintern regarded that the CPC's declaration urging support for the southwest-

¹ G. Dimitrov, "The Fifteenth Anniversary of the Communist Party of China", *The United Front*, New York, 1938, p. 195.

² *The Communist International*, Vol. XIII, No. 9, p. 588.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 587.

ern group against Chiang Kai-shek was a mistake. "In the present circumstances all internecine warfare in China facilitates the dark and dirty action of the Japanese plunderers."¹

In line with tasks of uniting the whole people for the national liberation defensive war against imperialist Japan, the Communist Party of China formulated more precise slogans. The call "Immediately proclaim war on Japan" was replaced with "Clear the Japanese usurpers out of China", and the slogans for the united front were put in a more concrete form. The Party demanded an end to all civil and internecine warfare, and the unification of all the forces of the Chinese people to fight the Japanese invaders: "The Chinese do not fight the Chinese" and "Chinese troops do not fight Chinese troops".

One of the new basic factors in the Comintern's tactics directed towards a united front in China was the replacement of the old slogan of the "Soviet People's Republic" with the slogan "an all-China democratic republic". "The Chinese Communists, who make their starting point the interests of the Chinese people, take account of the fact that the Soviet districts as yet occupy a comparatively small section of the territory of China, that a considerable section of the Chinese people are not yet ready for Soviet power.... The Communist Party declares its readiness to support the establishment of a united all-Chinese people's democratic republic."²

G. Dimitrov noted that this new political line of the CPC took account of the actual situation and corresponded "to the present stage of the liberation struggle in China".³

It was not all that simple for the CPC leadership to execute the new tactical shift from a united front against the Japanese aggressors and Chiang Kai-shek to a united anti-Japanese front together with Chiang Kai-shek. For nine years a bloody war was conducted against the Soviet regions on Chiang Kai-shek's orders, and hundreds of thousands of Communists and revolutionary workers and peasants

¹ *The Communist International*, Vol. XIII, No. 9, p. 590.

² *Ibid.*, p. 591.

³ G. Dimitrov, *Op. cit.*, p. 193.

died in Kuomintang dungeons. And even when the CPC decided to withdraw the slogan "Down with Chiang Kai-shek", he not only did not loosen the blockade of the Soviet region, but continued to prepare a fresh punitive campaign with the view to destroying the Red Army and the CPC. Hence the hatred of the Communists and the Red Army men for Chiang Kai-shek. In these circumstances all CPC members had to display a high degree of discipline, and the Party leadership political perspicacity in order to surmount the psychological barrier and to steer a course of converting Chiang Kai-shek into an ally in the joint struggle against the Japanese invaders. In these conditions the Comintern's recommendations concerning the CPC's attitude to the Nanking Kuomintang group were invaluable for the Chinese Communists.

The CPC began to switch to the new tactics, though not always consistently, only after the Comintern's insistent recommendations. On August 25, the CC CPC sent an open letter to the Kuomintang stating that it was prepared to unite with it "in a solid revolutionary united front, such as was the great united front of struggle against national and feudal oppression — the front of our two parties — in the period of the great Chinese revolution of 1924-27".¹ In a decision adopted on September 17, 1936 the CC CPC Politbureau characterised the Party's new policy towards the Nanking Kuomintang group as a policy of pressure designed to "force the Kuomintang Nanking Government and its army to take part in a war of resistance against Japan". In this decision the CC CPC concretely expounded the slogan of a united democratic republic, whose formation was, in its opinion, the best form of bringing together all anti-Japanese forces for the purpose of ensuring the territorial integrity of China and averting the threat to the existence of the state and the nation. "The democratic republic," the decision said, "will spread democracy to a bigger territory than the regime of the Soviets which was established only in part of China and will be a much more progressive system of administration than the dictatorship of one party — the

¹ *Materials on the History of the Chinese Revolution*, Vol. III, p. 175.

Kuomintang—established on the greater part of the country's territory.”¹

By withdrawing the slogan of struggle against the Nanking Government and replacing the slogan “Soviet People's Republic” with “united all-China democratic republic”, the CPC created favourable conditions for a united national anti-Japanese front. Among other things the changes in the CPC tactics were one of the factors that prompted the representatives of the national bourgeoisie and the ruling camp gradually to shift to united front positions. CPC officials established contacts and entered into negotiations with representatives of various public circles and political and military groupings. “In spite of the fact that many difficulties arose in the course of these negotiations,” noted the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Chinese Soviet Government Wang Chia-hsiang, “their practical result was that a number of military and political groups gradually became aware of the need to make determined efforts to unite for the struggle against Japan.”² Thus the negotiations between CPC representatives and the commanders of two of the biggest Kuomintang armies Chang Hsueh-liang and Yan Hu-chen in the autumn of 1936 resulted in the signing of an armistice and an agreement to prepare for a joint struggle against the Japanese aggressors.

Chang Hsueh-liang later wrote that that agreement with CPC representatives envisaged that the “integration of all Red Army units into national armed forces would be carried out with a guarantee to keep their combat strength intact”. In line with this agreement the CPC pledged to cease its political agitation in Kuomintang armed forces and not to participate in activities against the government or its leader Chiang Kai-shek. In exchange for this promise the Communists who were kept in Kuomintang prisons were to be released and the CPC legalised. Upon the end of the war against Japan the Red Army would have the same rights as the Nationalist troops and the Communist Party would continue to

function as a legal political organisation.¹ Thus, judging by the contents of the agreement, the commands of the Northeastern and the Northwestern armies regarded it as a preliminary step towards an agreement between the Kuomintang and the CPC. The agreement between the CPC and Chang Hsueh-liang on peace and joint actions against the Japanese aggressors was a result of the united front tactics. The CPC took into account the mood of the men and officers of the Northeastern Army and their nostalgia for their native places occupied by the Japanese militarists. It conducted extensive agitation among the soldiers and put forward slogans which matched their mood: “The Chinese do not fight the Chinese”, “Win back our native places”. The CPC also exploited the contradictions between the commands of the Northeastern and the Northwestern armies, on the one hand, and Chiang Kai-shek, on the other. Prominent CPC officials established close contacts with Chang Hsueh-liang and Yan Hu-chen and explained to them in detail the CPC policy for a broad united national front against the Japanese aggressors.

The commands of the armies became even more determined to repulse Japan after Kuomintang troops defeated the Japanese puppet army which launched an offensive in Suiyuan Province in November 1936. Events in the northwest of the country showed that some large units of the Kuomintang army together with their commands decided to resist the Japanese invaders. The anti-Japanese feelings of the command and soldiers of the Kuomintang armies in the northwest resulted in an open action against Chiang Kai-shek's capitulatory policy. On December 12, 1936 Chang Hsueh-liang and Yan Hu-chen arrested Chiang Kai-shek and more than 20 military and state leaders of the Nanking Government who had arrived in Sian. This was done in response to Chiang Kai-shek's refusal to repeal his order to mount a fresh offensive against the Red Army.

Chiang Kai-shek's arrest worsened the political situation in the country to the extreme. On the one hand, the Sian incident showed that there were quite formidable anti-Japanese forces in the Kuomintang Army itself, and, on the other,

¹ Kai-yu Hsu, *Chou En-lai: China's Gray Eminence*, New York, 1968, pp. 132-33.

¹ *Materials on the History of the Chinese Revolution*, Vol. III, p. 180.

² *The Student Movement for the Salvation of the Homeland*, Second Issue, Paris, 1937, p. 312 (in Chinese).

it caused a split in the ruling camp which could precipitate a major internecine war, that would benefit only the Japanese invaders.

In these circumstances the prevention of the civil war and the formation of a united anti-Japanese front in the country hinged on a peaceful settlement of the Sian incident.

There is proof that upon hearing of Chiang Kai-shek's arrest Mao Tse-tung came out against a peaceful settlement of the Sian incident and demanded that Chiang Kai-shek, whom he regarded as the "chief enemy of the people", should be dealt with accordingly. At a huge meeting in the Soviet region called on the occasion of Chiang Kai-shek's arrest which was "addressed by Mao Tse-tung and others, a resolution was passed to demand a 'mass trial' of Chiang Kai-shek as a traitor".¹

The Comintern realised that the Sian events could easily step up the civil war in China. At the time *The Communist International* published an article defining the Comintern's stand towards the Sian conflict: "As yet we have no completely verified information of the position taken by the Communist Party of China; however, knowing its general political line it is to be supposed that it will adopt precisely this line: for the peaceful solution of the conflict on the basis of the creation of a united anti-Japanese national front."²

On the second day after Chiang Kai-shek's arrest the *Pravda* carried an editorial entitled "Events in China" in which it sharply condemned the Sian incident as detrimental to the "process of consolidation of all forces working for the unification of China". It urged a peaceful settlement of the conflict.³ The Comintern's timely advice to the CPC leadership prevented the Party from adopting the dangerous course which Mao Tse-tung tried to foist upon it in December 1936.

Edgar Snow, referring to a certain X, whose name he

¹ Edgar Snow, *Random Notes on Red China (1936-1945)*, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, p. 1.

² *The Communist International*, New York, 1937, January, No. 1, p. 65.

³ *Pravda*, December 14, 1936.

chose not to disclose at the time, quoted his account of how the CPC leadership reacted to the Comintern's advice to release Chiang Kai-shek. According to X, Mao Tse-tung "flew into a rage", he "swore and stamped his feet. Until then they had planned to give Chiang a public trial and to organise a Northwest anti-Japanese defense government."¹

Immediately after the Sian events Chang Hsueh-liang and Yan Hu-chen took practical steps to establish a northwest anti-Japanese government. On December 14 an Extraordinary Committee of the United Anti-Japanese Army was set up. It was headed by Chang Hsueh-liang with Yan Hu-chen as his deputy. An active part in the Committee was played by Chou En-lai on behalf of the CPC. In the period preceding the peaceful settlement of the Sian incident the Committee was virtually the administrative and military authority in Shensi Province. It passed a resolution authorising the release of political prisoners and formation of the Northwestern United Anti-Japanese Army. There is indirect evidence that the CPC leadership intended to incorporate the Red Army into the united anti-Japanese Army and place it under Chang Hsueh-liang's command.² Thus Mao Tse-tung's initial position on the Sian incident was to "remove Chiang Kai-shek" and provoke a clash between the northwest military block and the Nanking group. Such an adventuristic policy could have only prolonged the civil war and cancelled the Party's preceeding efforts to set up a united front. In the light of the above no credence should be given to claims by Mao Tse-tung and Chinese historians that immediately after the Sian incident the CPC leadership initiated efforts to resolve it by peaceful means and secure Chiang Kai-shek's release.³

It was only thanks to the ECCI's consistent stand with regard to the Sian events that the dangerous situation was straightened out. During the Sian incident the Comintern's

¹ Edgar Snow, *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

² See: Kai-yu Hsu, *Op. cit.*, p. 134.

³ See: Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, London, 1954, p. 256; Hu Chiu-mu, *Thirty Years of the Communist Party of China*, p. 48; Miao Chu-huang, *A Short History of the Communist Party of China*, p. 144; Ho Kan-chih, *The History of the Contemporary Chinese Revolution*, p. 341.

leadership impressed upon the CC CPC that the Party's main task at the time was to leave no stone unturned in order to halt the civil war. The Comintern advised the CPC not to come out against Chiang Kai-shek and the Nanking Government, but, on the contrary, to win over Chiang Kai-shek and Nanking to its side to fight jointly against Japan. The Comintern made the point that the Party should view co-operation with Chang Hsueh-liang and Yan Hu-chen as an important step leading towards the conclusion of an agreement for a united anti-Japanese front with the Nanking Government.

By following these recommendations the CPC averted a further worsening of relations with the Kuomintang and was able to make the most of the dangerous situation to bring the viewpoints of both sides on the formation of a united front closer together.

Chiang Kai-shek's release and the peaceful settlement of the Sian incident initiated a change in the Kuomintang's stand towards the policy of civil war against the Red Army and created conditions for the CPC and the Kuomintang to begin talks on the resumption of co-operation in the war against the Japanese aggression.

THE FORMATION OF A UNITED FRONT OF THE CPC AND THE KUOMINTANG

In February 1937 the CC CPC sent a cable to the Third Plenary Meeting of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee proposing the following state policy programme: to put a complete end to the civil war, rally all the forces of the country for a united struggle against the external foe, guarantee freedom of speech, assembly and association, release all political prisoners, convene a conference of representatives of all parties, groups, all sections of the population and all the armed forces and thus unite the nation's best forces for a joint struggle for the salvation of the homeland, accelerate the preparations for an anti-Japanese war, improve the people's living conditions.

The CPC was prepared to offer the Kuomintang the following guarantees: to end the struggle against the Nanking Government throughout the country; rename the workers' and peasants' democratic government into the government

of the Special Region of the Chinese Republic, and the Red Army into the national revolutionary army; stop the confiscation of landed estates and resolutely implement the programme of the united anti-Japanese national front.¹

After the Third Plenary Meeting of the Kuomintang Executive Committee the two sides gradually began to move towards an agreement on co-operation. The most important thing was that both recognised the need to end the civil war in China.

The Japanese invasion of Northern China in July 1937, the seizure of Peking and Tientsin and the beginning of an operation to capture Shanghai compelled the Kuomintang leadership to hasten the formation of a united front with the Communist Party of China.

On September 22 the Kuomintang published a declaration, which it had received from the CC CPC as far back as July 15, on co-operation between the two parties. In this declaration the CPC repeated the proposals listed in its Address to the Third Plenary Meeting of the Kuomintang Central Executive Committee.

On September 23 the Kuomintang Central Press Agency published Chiang Kai-shek's statement announcing the establishment of co-operation between the Kuomintang and the CPC. He recognised the CPC's legal status and the importance of national unity. Kuomintang recognised the legitimate existence of the special frontier region and the armed forces of the CPC. In August the Red Army was renamed the 8th National Revolutionary Army and in October 1937 the guerrilla detachments of Southern China were united into the New 4th Army.

The establishment of a united anti-Japanese front was a major victory for the CPC and an important political achievement of the Chinese people. Formally, the united front was an agreement on co-operation between the CPC and the Kuomintang verbally confirmed by the head of the Nanking Government Chiang Kai-shek. Subsequently, the Kuomintang refrained from working out an official united front programme and its organisational forms.

¹ See: *Materials on the History of the Chinese Revolution*, Vol. III, pp. 189-90.

The united anti-Japanese front included heterogeneous forces: workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie and also part of the big landowners and the big bourgeoisie.

The Communist Party was the vanguard of the united front's progressive forces—workers, peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie. These social strata worked to develop a nation-wide resistance struggle and build a democratic China.

The struggle between the CPC and the Kuomintang in the united front was mainly for influence over the masses. The Communists sought to turn the CPC into a mass all-China party with its own powerful armed forces, strongholds and territories liberated from the forces of invasion, i.e., to promote the allround strengthening and growth of the revolutionary forces in the course of the national liberation war. The Kuomintang, on its part, strove to restrict the growth of the revolutionary forces, undermine the CPC's influence among the masses and even to absorb the CPC.

As a result, in the course of the anti-Japanese war the CPC had to cope with the urgent task of ensuring its organisational and political independence within the framework of the united front. The ECCI repeatedly drew the attention of the CPC leadership to the political importance of this issue. "In the conditions of a united front with the Kuomintang," the Comintern emphasised, "the CPC must retain full political and organisational independence, and resolutely counter the tendencies which may actually lead to the dissolution of the Communist Party in some sort of a general political alliance of anti-Japanese forces and the indiscriminate admission to Party membership of all applicants who merely profess to participate in the anti-Japanese war."¹

Contemporary Chinese historiography asserts that it was Mao Tse-tung who personally raised and solved the problem of the independence of the CPC in the united national anti-Japanese front. Facts, however, prove the opposite. In the initial period of the war (1937-38), the CPC leadership and, above all, one of its main figures Mao Tse-tung, com-

mitted serious right opportunistic errors in this fundamental question. The shift of the CPC leadership to the right which was expressed in a certain departure from class and political positions in behalf of the tactics of forming a united front with Chiang Kai-shek, coincided with a period of China's most serious defeats in the war against Japan. The Japanese militarists seized a huge part of China and all the main industrial centres and key railways. The Kuomintang Army retreated to the economically backward, chiefly agricultural regions. The Communist Party's armed forces were still insignificant and the guerrilla warfare behind the enemy lines was only in its initial phase. Naturally, in these difficult conditions it was necessary that the Kuomintang and the CPC should unite all their forces and the country should stand together in order to resist the aggressors. Yet it would have been impermissible if the CPC paid for co-operation with the Kuomintang by weakening its political and organisational independence. Nevertheless, judging by CC CPC documents and the speeches of CPC leaders in 1937 and 1938, the Party was prepared seriously to forgo its class and political interests. The Propaganda Department of the CC CPC on October 1937 issued a directive instructing all Party organisations not to propagandise the class struggle, internationalism and democracy on the grounds that such propaganda would undermine the national front.

At the beginning of the war Mao Tse-tung consistently supported entry of the Communists into the Kuomintang, regarding this as the best organisational form of the united front. He insisted that upon entering the Kuomintang the CPC would hand over to the Kuomintang authorities a list of Party members joining the Kuomintang, that the Party should not set up its underground organisations in the Kuomintang and the troops, that it should recognise the leading and guiding role of the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek in the united front and the national liberation struggle, and accept the Kuomintang's programme for "waging a war of resistance and building the state" as a general political platform of the united front. Mao Tse-tung set forth these views most comprehensively in a report to the Sixth Plenary Meeting of the CC CPC in the autumn of 1938. They were reflected in a resolution adopted by the meeting on Mao Tse-

¹ *The Struggle for the United National Anti-Japanese Front in China*, Moscow, 1937, p. 20 (in Russian).

tung's report.¹ Quite obviously, such concessions to the Kuomintang authorities at a time when the CPC had turned almost exclusively into an agrarian, and a chiefly petty-bourgeois party in terms of its composition, were bound seriously to undermine its political and organisational independence and, in the final analysis, to make it subordinate to the Kuomintang.

The Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang made the entry of the Communists into the Kuomintang directly contingent on their resignation from the CPC and rejection of Marxist ideology. Thus, Chiang Kai-shek in effect turned down the CPC's offer to join the Kuomintang.

After 1938 the relations between the CPC and the Kuomintang gradually deteriorated and at times were marked by open armed clashes. The growth of capitulatory feelings in the Kuomintang and the shift of the pro-Japanese group to the side of the enemy were accompanied by a strengthening of anti-communist tendencies. Nevertheless, owing to a range of international and domestic reasons the CPC and the Kuomintang maintained their united front throughout the war.

In practical terms this front manifested itself in that the Kuomintang army at the front and the CPC armed forces in the rear of the enemy independently fought against the common enemy—the Japanese invaders.

The existence of the united national anti-Japanese front created favourable conditions for the CPC to build up and consolidate its forces. Approximately a half and, at times, the bulk of the Japanese regular army was in action on the Kuomintang front. As a result, the Kuomintang even during relative lulls in the fighting immobilised fairly large enemy forces, which undoubtedly weakened the pressure of the invaders on the liberated regions controlled by the CPC.

There were good opportunities for mounting a large-scale peasant guerrilla war under CPC guidance behind Japanese lines, particularly in big rural areas. The bulk of the Japanese occupation forces controlled towns, industrial areas and communication lines, while the maintenance of order in the rural areas was assigned chiefly to the puppet Chinese

troops of Wang Ching-wei's pro-Japanese Nanking government which could not be compared with the Japanese regular army in terms of combat training and equipment.

When Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941 Japanese main ground forces in China—the million-strong Kwantung Army—were deployed along the Soviet border. With the outbreak of war in the Pacific Japan concentrated its main military efforts against the British and US forces. Consequently the Japanese Command was unable to send very significant forces to the Chinese front. The Japanese army which was in action against the Kuomintang and Communist troops in China from 1942 to 1945 had not more than 600,000 officers and men.

The shift in the Second World War in favour of the anti-fascist coalition as a result of the Soviet army's decisive victories, the deterioration of Japan's military and strategic position in the Pacific theatre brought about by the offensive operations of the British and US armies also created favourable conditions for the liberation struggle of the Chinese people.

The CPC took advantage of these opportunities to establish liberated areas in the rear of the enemy, build up a peasant army and rapidly swell the Party's ranks. Towards the end of the war the population of the liberated regions totalled about 100 million, the numerical strength of the army under the Communist command had risen to 900,000 men and the number of Party members increased to 1,200,000.

The Party's rapid numerical growth exclusively as a result of the entry of non-proletarian elements (peasants, kulaks, small landowners and the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia) fostered nationalistic trends in its leadership.

During the war against Japan Mao Tse-tung imposed a nationalistic military course on the Party with the result that it went back on its international commitments. He left with no response repeated requests from the Comintern and the CPSU to mount more vigorous actions against the Japanese army and thus facilitate the struggle of the anti-fascist forces against imperialist Japan. He stubbornly pursued a policy of passive warfare. After 1942 the numerical strength of the people's troops fighting directly against the Japanese steadily declined. The operations of the 8th and the New

¹ *Materials on the History of the Chinese Revolution*, Vol. IV, pp. 16-26.

4th armies were limited to guerrilla skirmishes with the puppet units. Military operations against the invaders in China retained this character until the Soviet Union entered the war against imperialist Japan in August 1945.

The swift and crushing defeat of Japan's main ground forces in China by the Soviet Army radically altered the military situation in the whole of China. As a result of the Soviet offensive the Japanese blockade of the liberated regions collapsed and the people's armed forces were able to advance in all directions without hindrance. After two months of offensive operations they considerably extended the liberated areas and took up important strategic positions. The Soviet Command turned over a considerable part of captured enemy weapons to the people's armed forces, thus substantially enhancing their fighting efficiency. The victorious operations of the Soviet Army enabled the Chinese people swiftly to conclude the long war against the Japanese invaders.

THE REACTION OF THE CPC LEADERSHIP TO THE DISSOLUTION OF THE COMINTERN

In the period under review, i.e., from its Seventh Congress in 1935 to May 1943, the Comintern pursued a strategic and tactical line which stimulated the revolutionary movement in China and helped the CPC to become a mass party. The CPC and its revolutionary forces turned into a decisive factor in the country's political life. The Comintern's recommendations at the most critical moments of the political struggle in China helped the Chinese Communists to find their bearings in the difficult struggle against superior forces of the internal and external reaction. At the same time the Seventh Congress of the Comintern instructed the ECCI "to proceed, in deciding any question, from the concrete situation and specific conditions obtaining in each particular country and as a rule to avoid direct intervention in internal organisational matters of the Communist Parties".¹

¹ *The Communist International*, Vol. XII, Nos. 17-18, London, 1935, p. 947.

The development of the Communist parties' creative approach to the strategic and tactical questions of the revolutionary movement stimulated among other things the growth of the CPC's independence. At the same time, however, some of its leaders with Mao Tse-tung at the head gradually slid down to narrow nationalistic positions. This process became particularly manifest after 1941 when the attention of the Comintern and the CPSU was riveted on the struggle against fascism. The nationalistic forces in the CPC deliberately launched a broad ideological and political campaign against the Chinese Communists-internationalists when the military situation in China began to deteriorate. Mao Tse-tung took advantage of this circumstance to find scapegoats for his own errors and to strengthen his position in the CPC leadership. It was at the end of 1941 that the so-called movement for the rectification of style of work in the Party with the view to asserting Mao Tse-tung's ideas as the CPC's sole guide to action, was launched on Mao Tse-tung's initiative. In the course of this campaign which lasted about four years Mao Tse-tung and his followers foisted Mao's "Sinicised Marxism" on the CPC and asserted his personality cult by repression and mass party purges. As a result of this campaign Mao Tse-tung managed to gain undivided leadership of the Party and the army and forced the CPC to accept "Sinicised Marxism" instead of Marxism-Leninism.

After Mao and his closest associates consolidated their positions nationalism became the main line of the CPC leadership in its relations with the Comintern and the USSR. Mao Tse-tung's nationalistic political course was vividly reflected in the CPC's refusal to fulfil its internationalist duty to the world communist movement during the Second World War. At a time when revolutionary and progressive forces throughout the world were fighting German fascism and Japanese militarism, Mao Tse-tung tried to impose the tactics of passive temporisation on the CPC. In the autumn of 1941, the tenser period of the Soviet fight against the nazi invaders, when the threat of a Japanese assault on the USSR was especially grave, Mao Tse-tung virtually turned down the direct request of the Comintern and the CPSU to intensify the struggle

against Japan and thus prevent it from striking at the rear of the USSR.¹

In the light of these facts the reaction of the Mao group to the dissolution of the Comintern in May 1943 becomes perfectly clear. The resolution of the CC CPC concerning the dissolution of the Comintern betrayed the frankly nationalistic sentiment of the Chinese leadership. The resolution made no mention whatsoever of the necessity to keep up the traditional ties and solidarity of the CPC with all other Communist parties. It emphasised that the dissolution of the Comintern freed the Communist Party of China "of its obligations stemming from the Rules of the Comintern and the decisions of its congresses,"² i.e., from any commitments to the world communist movement. The Chinese leadership tried hard to denigrate the Comintern's activity which contributed to the formation of the CPC and the education of cadres of Chinese Communists-Internationalists. Distorting the obvious historical truth, the CC CPC resolution said that "the best forces were forged by the Chinese Communist Party without any outside assistance".³ Characteristically, in a special statement in connection with the dissolution of the Comintern Mao Tse-tung promptly tried to legalise the "movement for the rectification of style" as a determinant of the entire further development of the CPC in order to make it "more national".⁴ In a word, he took advantage of the dissolution of the Comintern to resort to even coarser methods to implant his nationalistic views in the Party, suppress Chinese Communists-internationalists and assert his personality cult. And these negative developments in the CPC did in fact become more pronounced when the Comintern ceased to exist.

After 1943, Mao Tse-tung, under the pretext of criticising the Communists-internationalists Chu Chiu-po, Po Ku, Chang Wen-tien and particularly Wang Ming, who was the CPC's representative in the ECCI from 1931 to 1937, in effect marginalised all that was valuable and important in the Comintern's

¹ See: *Kommunist*, 1968, No. 6, p. 108; No. 9, p. 106 (in Russian).

² "Resolution of the CC CPC on the Decision of the ECCI Presidium to Dissolve the Comintern", *Chiefang-jipao*, May 27, 1943.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Chiefang-jipao*, May 28, 1943.

tern's strategy and tactics with regard to the Chinese revolution. Without batting an eye he assumed the credit for all the successes in the theoretical elaboration of the questions of the character of the revolution, of the motive forces, strategy and tactics of the revolutionary war, the formation of army, the tactics of the united front and so forth. But he kept silent about his own political blunders and tried to create the impression that his was the only correct and infallible line throughout the Chinese revolution. In order to enhance his prestige and assert his personality cult, Mao Tse-tung falsified the history of the CPC and the Chinese revolution, claiming that he was the Party's sole theoretician and a great leader of the Chinese people. These aspects of Mao Tse-tung's activity after the dissolution of the Comintern were reflected in the "Appendix: Resolution on Some Questions in the History of Our Party" which he wrote.¹

It goes without saying that the experience gained in the course of the national liberation movement, and the collective theoretical work of the Comintern, whose foremost minds interpreted the complicated revolutionary processes in the colonies and dependencies from Marxist positions, enriched Lenin's theory of the national and colonial revolution with new conclusions many of which are still of vast importance for the entire world communist movement. It is also quite natural that not everything in the Comintern's theoretical and practical heritage has passed the test of time.

The proletariat's class opponents, bourgeois ideologists, Trotskyites and other renegades who betrayed communism misrepresent and vilify the positive work and the theoretical and practical heritage of the Comintern in an attempt to undermine the contemporary international communist movement. Not infrequently, the positive aspects of the Comintern's activity, its theoretical and practical contribution to the victory of the Chinese revolution, are either passed over in silence or ascribed to Mao Tse-tung. Inside the Party this falsification is used to justify Maoism, and on the international scene, to belittle the role played by the Comintern

¹ Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, London, 1956, pp. 171-218.

and the CPSU in the formation and development of the CPC, and the elaboration and practical application of its strategy and tactics in the Chinese revolution. In the final analysis it is used to spread anti-Soviet propaganda and to undermine the principles of proletarian internationalism, the basis of the Comintern's entire activity.

THE COMINTERN AND THE PROBLEM OF A UNITED ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT IN INDIA

O. V. MARTYSHIN

Among the ideological and political trends which emerged in the national liberation movement in India after the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia the leading place belonged to Gandhism. It will not be an exaggeration to say that for the Indian communist movement the problem of a united front of all anti-imperialist forces was largely one of formulating its stand towards Gandhism. This was due both to its great political influence and its extensive and heterogeneous social base. It was not a simple matter to define a scientific, Marxist approach to Gandhism.

Gandhism emerged from the depths of Indian national life, from the depths of an original and ancient civilisation which preserved its vital force in spite of centuries of colonial exploitation. There was much in Gandhi's teaching that contradicted the ideals of scientific communism and diverged from the most common concepts of progress in the 20th century. In the era of the technological revolution and industrialisation Gandhi condemned machinery, protested against the planting of what he called satanic European civilisation on Indian soil, and came out with an appeal to return from the black age of large cities, avarice and modern technology to a modest rural community life, to a closed, self-sufficing communal economy based on the plough and the spinning wheel, on the combination of farming and home industries. In the era of the spread of a scientific materialistic world outlook in the social and national movement, Gandhi proclaimed religious principles as the foundation of any social and national struggle. He impregnated all the elements of his social and political programme with ancient re-

religious dogmas. In the period of the mass revolutionary struggle which after the First World War and the October Socialist Revolution in Russia enveloped the whole world, including India, he advanced the slogan of individual moral self-perfection, viewing it as a source of strength capable of resolving India's social problems. At a time of unprecedented aggravation and spread of the class struggle Gandhi advanced the idea of class peace and the abolition of social inequality through the establishment of trusteeship relations between the privileged and the oppressed classes. During the rapid radicalisation of political life attended by the employment of extreme forms of class and national liberation struggle, Gandhi proclaimed the ideals of non-violence, love for the enemy and the need to re-educate him morally through supreme self-sacrifice on the part of the enslaved people.

It was all the more difficult to make a political assessment of the role played by Gandhism, because Gandhi was both a utopian thinker who had assimilated the traditions of Indian patriarchal peasantry, and a sober, perceptive politician who had closely linked his activity with the bourgeois leadership of the Indian National Congress, and, in fact, stood at the head of this bourgeois political party. These two aspects of Gandhi's activity, these two images of Gandhism were not only extremely contradictory but at the same time closely interconnected. That was why Gandhi played such a prominent role in the Indian liberation movement.

The combination of Gandhi's archaic, medieval philosophy and the national reformist methods of the leadership of the Indian National Congress made it more difficult for the young revolutionary-minded political leaders who gravitated towards the communist movement to grasp the actual significance of Gandhism for the national liberation movement in the country.

The revolutionary upsurge and the successes achieved in the first years of the Comintern's activity attracted into the communist movement a large group of revolutionaries (particularly from the colonial countries), who lacked adequate theoretical and practical training. They displayed revolutionary impatience and had the natural desire to accomplish a socialist revolution as quickly as possible, sometimes dis-

regarding historical conditions and the need to carry on systematic painstaking work to prepare the masses and get them to assimilate socialism. Leftist zeal also manifested itself in the attitudes to the national liberation movement. At the initial stage, however, it had no serious impact on the Comintern's activity because the communist movement and the work of the Comintern were guided by Lenin who was a consistent opponent of all and any deviations.

THE COMINTERN'S STRUGGLE AGAINST M. N. ROY'S LEFT-SECTARIAN CONCEPTS

At the Second Congress of the Comintern which for the first time discussed the colonial and national questions, Lenin came out against the views of the Indian Communist M. N. Roy; Lenin upheld the idea of the unity of all anti-imperialist forces and the need actively to support the bourgeois-democratic national movement. Roy proceeded from the erroneous assumption that the irreconcilable class contradictions between the bourgeoisie, workers and the peasantry, allegedly ruled out the possibility of creating a united front of the classes in the national liberation anti-imperialist struggle. He overestimated the maturity of the working class and advocated a struggle against the bourgeois nationalist leadership of the anti-imperialist movement. Maintaining that this leadership was notoriously non-revolutionary he urged the organisation of an independent liberation movement led by Communists.

Roy's views are an example of left-sectarian deviation. Owing to the weakness of the working-class and communist movement in India, his pseudo-revolutionary programme was unrealistic not only in the 1920s but even many years later.

The polemic between Lenin and Roy centred on theoretical and concrete problems of the national liberation movement, particularly in India. They included the problem of Gandhism—the assessment of its role and place in the anti-imperialist struggle. Roy's *Memoirs* contains Lenin's assessment of Gandhi's activity. "The role of Gandhi," Roy wrote, "was the crucial point of difference. Lenin believed that, as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, he was a revolutionary. I maintained that, as a religious and cultur-

al revivalist, he was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically."¹

In India the implementation of Lenin's propositions which he advanced at the Second Congress of the Comintern and which were reflected in the famous theses on the national and colonial questions, was handicapped by considerable objective as well as subjective difficulties. The prominent functionary of the Communist Party of India S. G. Sardesai wrote that "M. N. Roy was at that time, and for some years later, the leading and most developed Indian communist, whether in India or abroad."² Owing to his status in the Comintern Roy was the principal interpreter and propagandist of the Second Congress' decisions concerning India. Meanwhile, he did not repudiate his views which he defended in the polemic with Lenin. Therefore in the years when the Comintern definitely adopted Lenin's point of view, Roy's stand was, on the one hand, to reconcile the Comintern's platform with his views as far as it was possible, and on the other, to try and influence the position of the Comintern. He was not alone in his delusions concerning the role of the national bourgeoisie and Gandhism in the liberation movement. From time to time he found supporters among the emergent Indian communist movement and in the Comintern. To an extent this accounted for the fact that the activities of the emergent communist movement in India and in some other Eastern countries were far from always consistent with the strategic course of the Second Congress of the Comintern.

The first attempt to set up the Communist Party of India was made in 1920. In 1921 the Communists addressed an appeal to the 36th annual session of the Indian National Congress in Ahmadabad. In this document they conceded that the Congress could play a leading role in the movement for independence, but at the same time underlined that in order to win the support of the whole people, it would have to adopt as its programme the demands of trade unions and peasant assemblies. The Communists' appeal was designed to broaden the non-co-operation movement just when it was

¹ M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, p. 379.

² S. G. Sardesai, *India and the Russian Revolution*, New Delhi, 1967, p. 51.

about to enter its decisive phase, that of the mass refusal of the peasantry to pay taxes to the British colonial authorities. The Congress did not respond to the appeal; it did not intend to extend the front of the liberation struggle and to meet the demands of the working people.

A year later, when the Congress gathered for its regular session, this time at Gaya, in conditions of the defeat of the national movement, the Indian Communists once again addressed an appeal to it. Written by M. N. Roy and published in the organ of the Indian Communists *The Advance Guard*, it was distributed among the delegates at the session. Alongside demands for full independence of the country, the programme offered by the Communists urged the liquidation of landed estates, nationalisation of all public enterprises, participation of the workers in the profits of enterprises and arming of the people in order to defend national freedom.¹

It was a programme which could neither be accepted by the Congress nor serve as a basis for co-operation between the Indian Communists and the bourgeois anti-imperialist organisation which wielded almost undivided political influence over the broad masses in the struggle against British rule. The presentation of the working people's maximum social demands which went beyond the limits of a bourgeois-democratic revolution at a time when India had no influential Marxist-Leninist party and no independent movement of the working class, when it was impossible to establish the hegemony of the proletariat in the national liberation movement, only artificially augmented and aggravated contradictions in the national anti-imperialist front and brought the small group of Communists into isolation. Roy steered his line of two contrasting liberation movements and ruled out the possibility of their coming together on the basis of a certain community of interests. Therefore any reference to co-operation with the Congress was in effect a demand that it should shift to the positions of the Communists. And since this was out of the question the whole case was reduced to a desire to exhibit the allegedly reactionary nature of the Congress. This course was under the ideological influence of Roy who

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

asserted that the communist vanguard should stand at the head of the national movement from the very outset.

Among the materials which figured at the trial of Communists in Kanpur in 1924 there was a letter from Roy to S. A. Dange. In it Roy admitted that he did not even expect the Congress to adopt his programme and that it was designed to demonstrate the Congress' inability to support the revolutionary demands, and thus to make it absolutely clear that a new mass party with its own leadership and programme had to be created.

Roy theoretically substantiated his positions in his book *India in Transition* published in 1922. The attitude of Roy and his supporters towards the national liberation movement in India and Gandhism were also expressed in series of articles carried by periodicals (some of them written by Roy's wife Evelyn Roy) and in *One Year of Non-Cooperation* written by Roy and his wife.

Overstating the level of capitalist development in India, Roy claimed that a bourgeois-democratic revolution was no longer on the agenda in that country. The national bourgeoisie was not in a position to lead the liberation movement even though it was interested in forming an alliance with the masses and relying on them in order to be able to fight successfully against the British colonialists. Its fear of the revolutionary spirit of the masses doomed it to indecision, vacillations and betrayal of national interests.

It was from these positions that he approached Gandhism, which he did not characterise as the ideology of the bourgeoisie; on the contrary, he called it a petty-bourgeois ideology. But proceeding from the concept that the character of the national movement was not bourgeois-democratic, for it struggled against foreign capitalism and not against feudalism, he did not attach any revolutionary significance to the petty bourgeoisie with whose feelings and interests Gandhism was organically linked. Roy maintained that Gandhism and the petty bourgeoisie bound up their future with reaction and not with the national liberation struggle, and that they moved even farther away from the national revolutionary movement than the national bourgeoisie. "The reactionary and politically bankrupt petty bourgeoisie... was very anxious to go away from the dangerous influence

of the two revolutionary factors behind the National Movement, namely the progressive bourgeoisie and the militant proletariat,"¹ he wrote in 1923.

It is hard to say what prompted him to make such an assessment of the role of the petty bourgeoisie in the national movement. Perhaps the reason was that he did not believe in the objectively revolutionary character of peasant utopias and did not understand that at times the conservative views of the peasants in the specific conditions of an agrarian country oppressed by the colonialists and the feudal lords, possessed considerable revolutionary potentialities and that they were more democratic than the traditional bourgeois concepts, although the latter undoubtedly emerged from new bourgeois social phenomena and not from the doomed but still tenacious past. In any case Roy's recognition of the petty-bourgeois nature of Gandhism did not prevent him from "linking" it not only with the bourgeois, but also with the feudal reaction, and qualifying it as "the acutest and most desperate manifestation of the forces of reaction",² thus betraying his political and theoretical immaturity.

Roy attributed the anti-capitalist aspects of Gandhian ideology to feudal, rather than to democratic sympathies. He questioned the sincerity of Gandhi's humanistic ideals and in doing so mixed up the objective and subjective, the utopian projects of social change and the concrete programme of political action. "This strong instinct of preserving property rights," he wrote, "above all betrays the class affiliation of Gandhi, in spite of his pious outbursts against the sordid materialism of modern civilisation. His hostility to capitalist society is manifestly not revolutionary, but reactionary. He believes in the sanctity of private property, but seeks to prevent its inevitable evolution to capitalism."³ As a result of his preoccupation with criticism of Gandhi's archaic views and utopian social concepts Roy overlooked the main thing, namely that Gandhi vigorously opposed imperialism, the colonialists and their domination of India.

Roy denied altogether the revolutionary potential of a

¹ M. N. Roy, "Indian National Congress", *International Press Correspondence*, 1923, Vol. 3, No. 8, p. 126.

² M. N. Roy, *India in Transition*, Geneva, 1922, p. 205.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

mass non-violent movement led by an anti-imperialist party. "The cult of non-violence is inseparable from an anti-revolutionary spirit," he wrote. "Those who do not want a *revolution* in India can pin their hope on non-violent methods. Strictly non-violent methods are hardly distinguishable from constitutional agitation, and no people on the face of the earth ever made a revolution by constitutional methods."¹ He qualified non-violence as the legacy of Gandhi's spiritual forebears—kings, clergymen and philosophers who believed that it was a good thing to keep the people in subjection.² Roy's dogmatic, simplistic approach to Gandhism led him to believe that its collapse was imminent.³ Such was his appraisal of Gandhi and Gandhism in 1922 and 1923 when Gandhi called a stop to mass civil disobedience in view of an outburst of violence in Chauri-Choura. At the time even many bourgeois nationalists were justly indignant with Gandhi for making this decision which brought about the curtailment and the demoralisation of a powerful popular movement.

Roy correctly pointed to Gandhism's contradictory and inconsistent nature and its using the tactics of non-violence to curb the revolutionary energy of the masses. Still he based his assessment of events not only on concrete reality, i.e., on the situation in India in that period which provided serious grounds for such an approach, but also on his personal conviction that it was impossible in principle to co-operate with Gandhi and the Congress in anti-imperialist actions. Otherwise, taking the negative aspects of the ideology and tactics of Gandhism into consideration, Roy would have also to reckon with its anti-imperialist potentialities which were not exploited to the full between 1919 and 1922 and even less so in later years. He ignored Gandhism's vast influence on the masses which alone should have compelled him to search for a more diversified and profound approach to this phenomenon. His prediction about the imminent collapse of Gandhism was overturned by the course of events.

¹ *The Advance Guard*, December, 1922, p. 2.

² See: M. N. Roy and Evelyn Roy, *One Year of Non-Cooperation*, Calcutta, 1923.

³ M. N. Roy, *India in Transition*, p. 208.

His criticism of Gandhism which was correct in some respects, was much less valid because not only did he refuse to take into account all the positive aspects of Gandhi's social and political programme but he identified it with reaction and obscurantism. He made absolutely no attempt to criticise the weak and reactionary aspects of Gandhism by comparing them with its strong and progressive aspects.

Roy admitted that in their efforts to strengthen the position of the left forces in the Congress, the Communists merely succeeded in frightening them. Yet, remaining loyal to his concepts which were rejected by the Second Congress of the Comintern, Roy believed that this was an achievement because it allegedly exposed the actual non-revolutionary intentions of the Congress' leadership.¹ The fact that Roy was concerned only with exposing Gandhi and his political tactics which differed so greatly from the tactics of accomplishing an armed revolution, caused a great deal of harm to Roy and many of his supporters. They simply failed to see that Indian anti-imperialist nationalism which found its most vivid expression in Gandhism possessed a vast charge of revolutionary, nationalist energy. This energy was expressed in specific forms peculiar only to India, to its masses, and only in the conditions of the objective community of the interests of all forces of the national liberation struggle. This community of interests lasted in India at least for thirty years up to the winning of independence.

Here, too, like in many other fundamental matters, Roy confuses right with wrong. To be precise, Roy's desire to be too correct and one hundred percent orthodox, his naive conviction of the possibility of non-critical and non-creative application of basically correct ideas to reality which abounded in contradictions and had no classical clarity whatsoever, caused him to distort, simplify and to carry to an absurdity the fundamental conclusions of Marxist theory. Roy believed that the Indian national liberation movement, which developed under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie,

¹ See: *International Press Correspondence*, 1923, Vol. 3, No. 8, p. 127.

had a revolutionary potential, only in its initial phase. Yet Gandhi, Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai and other leaders of the Indian liberation movement waged the anti-imperialist struggle for decades. This struggle produced many new leaders who deepened the liberation movement, sought to give it a broad social basis, and drew closer with the working class moving it to forward positions. Many of these leaders became Marxist-Leninists. Participation in the anti-imperialist front and support for all progressive measures of the national leadership, all of which naturally did not rule out profound class contradictions and implied serious criticism of the class narrow-mindedness of the bourgeois leaders, were, as can be gathered from Indian experience, the fertile soil for the growth of the young communist movement. Nevertheless Roy urged a complete break with revolutionary nationalism on the grounds that it would become conciliatory one day. He believed that co-operation with the anti-imperialist movement led by the national bourgeoisie was out of the question.

At the Fourth Congress of the Comintern Roy tried to assert his standpoint in the international communist movement. He formulated his theses on the colonial question and produced arguments to back them up.

Without directly rejecting Lenin's idea about the tactics of the united front in the national liberation movement, Roy advanced arguments expounded in his *India in Transition* in an effort to prove that it was unacceptable for India. He said that the bourgeoisie could be the vanguard of the movement in countries where it fought against feudalism, while in India it fought not against feudalism, but against foreign capitalism. He maintained that in the economically more advanced colonial countries, such as India, the bourgeoisie was connected by means of its interests with the existing economic system. Fearing chaos and anarchy which could arise as a result of the overthrow of foreign rule, it tempered its patriotism in order to protect its own economic interests.

"There comes a time when these people are bound to betray the movement and become a counter-revolutionary force," he wrote. "Unless we are prepared to train politically the other social element, which is objectively more revolu-

tionary, to step into their places and assume the leadership, the ultimate victory of the nationalist struggle becomes problematical for the time being."¹ The reason why Roy's theses were turned down by the Fourth Congress of the Comintern is clear. While noting the certain successes of the communist movement in India, the Fourth Congress also pointed out that its links with the mass movement and workers' strikes were weak and that it did not make the most of the legal methods of struggle.

Roy's line ran counter to the Comintern's directives and the ECCI rejected his attitude to the national bourgeoisie. The Comintern held that the Indian bourgeoisie was a revolutionary factor because its interests objectively contradicted imperialism and that the struggle for national liberation was a revolutionary movement. In the opinion of the ECCI a workers' and peasants' political party which participated in this movement had to co-operate with bourgeois parties and support them because in their own way they also fought against imperialism.

In 1923 the colonial authorities arrested many prominent functionaries of the communist movement in India. In 1924 they were tried and sentenced by a court in Kanpur. This weakened the young movement. In 1925, S. A. Dange, M. A. Thate and other former participants in Gandhi's nationalist movement who became disenchanted with it founded the Communist Party of India. Many of its members were well acquainted with the nature of the nationalist movement and approached it from realistic positions.

Yet Roy persisted in his course, and even committed more serious sectarian blunders. At the Fifth Congress of the Comintern he opposed the articles of the draft resolution on the establishment of direct contacts between the ECCI and the national liberation movements.² The Chairman of the Commission on the Colonial Question D. Z. Manuilsky underscored the deviations which took place in the Commission. He noted that just as at the Second Congress Roy overestimated the level of the development of the socialist move-

¹ *The Advance Guard*, January 15, 1923, p. 3.

² *International Press Correspondence*, 1924, No. 50, p. 519.

ment in the colonies at the expense of the national movement. Roy went to the extent of saying that the national movement had allegedly lost the nature of a united front of the basic classes of the oppressed country and that the movement had entered a new period. Manuilsky observed that Roy's attitude to the colonial question reflected the nihilism of Rosa Luxemburg towards the national movements and exaggerated the scope and significance of a class struggle in a nation.¹

Roy once again systematically expounded his line in his book *The Future of Indian Politics*. "Practically," he wrote, "the bourgeois bloc seeks to make a united front with the imperialist forces of law and order to make the country safe against any possible revolution. The middle class, which still makes the show of a parliamentary fight, is in hopeless political bankruptcy."² Continuing, he observed: "The movement for national liberation will take place on the basis of the struggle between the exploiting and exploited classes. Henceforth the fight for national freedom in India becomes a class struggle approximating to the final stage."³ It is difficult to imagine a greater lack of understanding of the elementary principles of the proletariat's class policy than these statements. They manifest utter disregard for the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, overt withdrawal of the tasks of the national liberation struggle from the agenda, confusion of stages and phases of the struggle, gross violation of Lenin's united national front tactics, ludicrous repudiation of the obviously anti-imperialist progressive role of the national bourgeoisie, and finally, the promotion of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat to first place. Yet historical conditions demanded that priority be given to the nation-wide struggle against the common national enemy—imperialism. In practice Roy's "super-revolutionary" statements proved to be totally untenable.

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, 1924, No. 57, p. 608.

² M. N. Roy, *The Future of Indian Politics*, London, 1926, p. 90.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

THE SHIFT IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN THE PERIOD OF THE SIXTH CONGRESS OF THE COMINTERN

In the latter half of the 1920s Roy's personal influence on the Comintern's policy in the colonial question waned and fell to zero. But in some respects the Comintern's attitude to the colonial question was influenced by Stalin's propositions set forth in 1925 in his speech "The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East".

Talking on the necessity for the proletariat in the colonial countries to organise into Communist parties, bring the peasant masses out of the influence of the conciliatory bourgeoisie and assume leadership of the national liberation movement, Stalin divided the bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi-colonies into two groups according to its attitude to the national liberation movement: revolutionary and conciliatory, one consisting of the petty bourgeoisie, the other of the big bourgeoisie (i. e., according to such a division the latter included all the vehicles of developed capitalist production). As regards India, its distinguishing feature, according to Stalin, was that "the compromising section of this bourgeoisie has already managed, in the main, to strike a deal with imperialism". Stalin viewed the liberation movement as a struggle between two blocs: the petty bourgeoisie with the working masses, on the one side, and the big bourgeoisie with the feudal strata and imperialism, on the other.¹ At the time, in 1924 and 1925, prior to the beginning of the Chinese revolution, some of the Communist leaders underestimated the socio-economic basis of the national liberation struggle in the 20th century.

Between 1925 and 1927, when the anti-imperialist revolution got under way in China, the Comintern surmounted these trends and began to work for a union between the communist movement in China and the national-patriotic, anti-imperialist circles, which played a leading role in this revolution. At the time underestimation of the anti-imperial-

¹ J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 7, p. 150.

ist potentialities of the national bourgeoisie of the East was justly regarded as a deviation from the correct course.

After Chiang Kai-shek's counter-revolutionary coup, Wang Ching-wei's betrayal and the defeat of the Chinese revolution, the Comintern somewhat modified its standpoint, which can be seen in some of the decisions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

This Congress, which paid a great deal of attention to the colonial problem, especially to India, was characterised by a struggle between two trends: that of the Second Congress, i.e., Lenin's line, and the sectarian trend which as before was supported by Roy although he ceased to be its authoritative mouthpiece and shortly after the Congress formally rejected it.

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern adopted a line, which, as O. V. Kuusinen, the main speaker on the colonial question at that Congress, observed thirty years later at the 20th CPSU Congress, "had a certain touch of sectarianism" in regard to the national bourgeoisie of the colonies and semi-colonies.¹

One of the reasons for that was that the conclusions drawn from the experience of the alliance between the CPC and the Kuomintang which was sundered by Chiang Kai-shek, were mechanically applied to the colonial and semi-colonial countries, including India. This served as a basis for asserting that the national bourgeoisie would inevitably betray the cause of national liberation and move into the camp of the counter-revolution. The logical conclusion was that only the hegemony of the proletariat and guidance by the Communist party would ensure the success of the national liberation movement. O. V. Kuusinen pointed out at the Sixth Congress: "The leading thought of the Theses: the hegemony of the proletariat in the Revolutionary movement of the colonies."²

This meant that the proletariat and its Marxist party had to exercise their hegemony already at the anti-imperialist stage of the struggle, when the other classes, the na-

¹ *20th Congress of the CPSU. Verbatim Report*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1956, p. 503 (in Russian).

² *International Press Correspondence*, No. 81, November 21, 1928, p. 1519.

tional bourgeoisie in the first place, had not yet discredited themselves by coming to terms with imperialism and had not exhausted their revolutionary potentialities. This was an erroneous course which ignored the realities of the anti-imperialist struggle, the structure of colonial society and the correlation of class forces in the East. The existing conditions offered no objective grounds for believing that the hegemony of the proletariat was both inevitable and essential in the initial phases of the national revolution. Neither the Russian experience of 1905 (negation of the revolutionary role of Russian bourgeoisie), nor the Chinese experience of 1925-27 (the Kuomintang's severance of its alliance with the Communists) could be directly applied to India, Indonesia and the Arab East where at the time of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and later the national bourgeoisie retained its positions as a revolutionary anti-imperialist force.

The struggle between the two trends in the assessment of the role played by the national bourgeoisie became especially manifest in the theses on the national and colonial questions. They disclosed a desire not to overestimate the hostility of the national bourgeoisie towards the revolutionary movement, not to deny fully its ability to play a positive role in the struggle for national liberation, not to gloss over and not to deny the objective contradictions between it and imperialism, but rather to appreciate its objective aspiration to national independence and its influence on the national movement. This was the purpose of the criticism of the "decolonialisation" theory advanced by some British and Indian Communists. The main idea of this theory was that the anti-industrialisation economic policy of British imperialism in India had allegedly changed, and that it was in its own interests to make concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie and begin to industrialise the country. Hence the conclusion that objective reasons for contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and imperialism were beginning to disappear and their interests to coincide to an ever greater degree and that consequently an economic foundation was being laid for the establishment of a bloc between these two formerly hostile forces and for the complete transition of the national bourgeoisie to the camp of the counter-revolution. This theory whose purpose was economi-

cally to substantiate the views about the counter-revolutionary nature of the bourgeoisie was, nevertheless, rejected by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

O. V. Kuusinen said: "Could we, however, assert with certainty, in general theses of the C. I., that in all colonial countries the possibility is excluded that a part of the national bourgeoisie, even if for a very short period only, would join up with the national-revolutionary camp? No we cannot do this."¹ Therefore, he maintained, the proletariat and its party had to make full use of the bourgeoisie's limited revolutionary potentialities. He disagreed with those who insisted that the national bourgeoisie in India had already gone over to the side of the counter-revolution and united with the imperialists. Mentioning the conciliatory tendencies of the Indian national bourgeoisie he said at the same time that it was necessary to bear in mind that "the objective conditions of the national-revolutionary movement do not depend on the subjective will of the bourgeoisie".²

"The national bourgeoisie," he observed, "is, of course, also aiming at unlimited rule; it wants, so to speak, to achieve power like a thief. However, its opposition has in the present epoch a certain objective importance for the unchaining of the mass movement."³ He referred to the non-payment of taxes campaign in Bardoli conducted on Gandhi's instructions, to the participation of the Indian National Congress in the Anti-Imperialist League sympathetic to the USSR, and the election of "Nehru junior, a national-revolutionary", General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, as examples of certain revolutionary potentialities which the Indian national bourgeoisie still possessed. Referring to the movement in Bardoli, he said: "If we had a genuine Communist Party in India, then this Bardoli action would have afforded us the opportunity to utilise the mass movement; as it is, however, we could not at all take advantage of it."⁴

Yet, the above realistic points in the materials of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern coexisted with the principal

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, No. 81, November 24, 1928, p. 1526.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1229.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1525.

idea that the national bourgeoisie was bound to betray the cause of national liberation. This predominant idea in the documents of the Congress was a serious concession to the left-sectarian deviation in the communist movement. In fact it minimised the chances of the Communist parties co-operating with the national bourgeoisie and made it impossible to take advantage of the movement it organised. Along with the recognition of certain revolutionary potentialities of the bourgeoisie the documents contained the one-sided view that it could not consistently and independently uphold its objective class interests and was therefore national reformist in character. That explained the Congress' attitude to those actions of the bourgeoisie which could have a certain revolutionising anti-imperialist effect. In terms of the possibility of co-operating with the national bourgeoisie in furthering the common cause of national independence, such actions had to be welcomed. But if one was to proceed from the inevitability of a clash with the national bourgeoisie as a traitor of the liberation movement, bound in any case to unite with imperialism, then these actions of the bourgeoisie, its anti-imperialist activity and the mass anti-imperialist movements it guided should be regarded as a tactical manoeuvre designed to deceive the masses. The Sixth Congress adopted the latter stand.¹

Although the Theses of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and the additional comments presented by the main speaker did have a certain tinge of sectarianism, they were nevertheless far from the line which some delegates sought to impose upon the Comintern. Some Indian delegates, for instance, criticised the Theses from leftist positions.

One of them, Sikander Sur, a co-reporter on the revolutionary movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, repeated Roy's thesis about the two trends in the national movement. "From time to time," he said, "the national bourgeoisie are adopting a revolutionary attitude towards

¹ "It would not be a good thing for our Party or the revolutionary movement in a colony," said O. V. Kuusinen, "if in certain circumstances the reformist bourgeoisie were to join the national-revolutionary front for a time. This would be a most dangerous situation and our comrades must be prepared for such a dangerous situation." (*International Press Correspondence*, Op. cit., p. 1528.)

British imperialism and are proposing a bloc with us, but we cannot rely on their support during the intensified struggle."¹ Sikander Sur ruled out the possibility of a long period of co-operation even with the left wing of the Indian bourgeoisie which advanced the slogan of "full independence". "It would be harmful," he continued, "to think that these people can be utilised to a great extent for our cause."² His co-report carried the idea that the national bourgeoisie had formed a bloc with the landowners and the imperialists: "In spite of the development of modern means of production in India, the backwardness of the country is marked by the fact that the middle classes are united with the land-owning class in a bloc. The British imperialists, taking advantage of the situation make a united front with the landed aristocracy subordinating the bourgeoisie."³

Negation of the anti-imperialist role of the national bourgeoisie in the liberation struggle went hand in hand with an obvious overestimation of the maturity of the proletariat's class awareness. "In this fight, in all these recent strikes and developments it is quite evident that the movement is greater than British imperialism, or its lackeys in the shape of the Indian bourgeoisie and the reformists can crush."⁴ Incidentally, Sikander Sur coined the term "lackeys of imperialism" as applied to the national bourgeoisie and characterised Gandhi as an "agent of imperialism".⁵

Another Indian delegate, Narayan, criticised all the propositions that implied that the bourgeoisie had not yet fully divorced itself from the liberation movement and was still influential among the masses. He disputed the statements made in the Theses to the effect that the swarajists,⁶ wafdists⁷ and others had not yet betrayed the national libera-

¹ *International Press Correspondence, Op. cit.*, p. 1248.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1247.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1248.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1473. "Gandhi," said Sikander Sur, "played a definite role as agent of imperialism."

⁶ A group of INC members headed by P. M. Nehru and Chitta Ranjan Das who formed an independent party inside the Congress in 1920.

⁷ Wafd Party, a major Egyptian political party was established in 1918, and mainly represented the interests of the national bourgeoisie.

tion struggle as did the Kuomintang in China (this idea of Narayan was supported by Sikander Sur in his concluding remarks).

Narayan objected to those places in the Theses which referred to the objective nature of the contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and imperialism. He tried to refute these premises on the basis of the decolonisation theory. "So long as imperialism was obstructing the capitalist development in India, the Indian bourgeoisie was a driving force," he reasoned. "The change of policy has already led to a corresponding change in the attitude of the Indian bourgeoisie towards British imperialism. We find that to the same degree as the hindrance in the way of the capitalist development of India has been removed by British imperialism, the bourgeoisie is sliding more and more towards co-operation and one group after the other is capitulating to imperialism."¹ He believed that the Indian national bourgeoisie had already betrayed the mass national liberation movement.

Narayan also criticised another, very important proposition in the draft theses. He said that the Communists' "agitation in this stage should not concentrate the sharpest fight against the bourgeoisie, but should turn it against the present immediate chief foe, the ruling imperialist feudal bloc".²

He also disagreed with the assessment of the workers' and peasants' parties given in the Theses. "The special workers' and peasants' parties," the Theses said, "no matter how revolutionary they may be, can very easily turn into ordinary petty-bourgeois parties. Therefore it is not advisable to organise such parties. Just as a Communist party cannot be built on the basis of a merger of two classes, it cannot set itself the task of organising other parties on such a basis which is typical of petty-bourgeois groups."

Narayan maintained that the paragraph dealing with the workers' and peasants' parties manifested a very weak and unrealistic attitude to these parties.³

To back up his views he quoted a long excerpt from

¹ *International Press Correspondence, Op. cit.*, p. 1390.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1391.

³ *Ibid.*

Stalin's speech at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in which he said that the Indian bourgeoisie had already formed a bloc with British imperialism, and that it was up to the working class to smash this bloc of imperialism and the bourgeoisie and form a revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc which could take the form of a united workers' and peasants' party.

The workers' and peasants' parties which were organised in 1927 and 1928 under communist leadership in Bengal, Bombay, Punjab, the United Provinces and other parts of India actively propagated the demands of the revolutionary national movement and the consolidation of the country's working people.¹ Yet their role was vague. The Comintern noted that it would be extremely dangerous if these parties were to substitute for the communist movement with its clearly defined ideology and organisation. Narayan told the Congress that the workers' and peasants' parties did not substitute for the Communist Party. The idea of forming a mass party independent of the Indian National Congress under the guidance of the Communists was put forward by M. N. Roy. In effect it was precisely this idea that Narayan developed at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and used Stalin's speech "The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East" to substantiate it. But the practical activity of the workers' and peasants' parties transcended the ideological precepts which smacked of sectarianism.

An interesting speech was also delivered by another Indian delegate, Raz. He too proceeded from the assumption that "the history of the Indian Nationalist Movement is a history of the treacherous betrayal of the toiling masses by the national bourgeois leaders". Raz was convinced that India could achieve national liberation only through a socialist revolution. "Imperialism is the creation and chief-in-command of the capitalists. Communism is the creation and the advance-guard of the toiling masses. All the rest of the political parties fall into either of the two main categories."²

Such simplism, the reluctance to see the intermediate, transitional stages between the poles of world social devel-

opment were to a degree typical of the speeches of many delegates at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern: there is imperialism and communism; the national liberation movement cannot occupy an independent position; it inevitably gravitates towards one or the other pole even before the country wins independence; if it takes to socialism it is progressive; if it chooses otherwise it is reactionary; it is either the one or the other. In spite of individual efforts to distinguish and characterise the different stages of the revolutionary movement in the colonial and dependent countries, the strategic tasks of the national liberation and socialist revolution were in some measure confused owing to the absence of a dialectical, concretely historical analysis in the speeches of a number of the delegates.

It was quite natural to set the Indian proletariat the revolutionary task to expand its influence in the liberation movement, to free the peasant masses from the influence of the bourgeoisie and at an historically opportune moment make an attempt to head the movement as a whole. But it was wrong to appraise the situation which developed in the country only in the light of these long-term tasks and deny the objectively progressive nature of the mass anti-imperialist struggle waged by the Indian national bourgeoisie headed by Gandhi and with the help of Gandhism. It was wrong to rule out in advance the possibility of winning independence under the leadership of the national bourgeoisie. This misapprehension resulted from a one-sided appraisal of Indian reality, obvious overestimation of the class awareness of the working masses and underestimation of the actual influence of the national bourgeoisie which led millions of peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie and even part of the proletariat. Finally, this stance was characterised by disregard not only for the national interests in the struggle for independence, but also for the abundant and long-standing traditions of resistance to British domination conducted for decades under the leadership of bourgeois elements, which united almost the entire nation in a single anti-imperialist front led by the Indian National Congress.

A certain overestimation of the strength and political maturity of the communist movement in India also made itself felt. At the end of the 1920s India still had no organised

¹ See: S. G. Sardesai, *Op. cit.*, p. 76.

² *International Press Correspondence, Op. cit.*, p. 1453.

influential Communist Party. There were only separate groups with hardly any organisational links with each other. Most of their members were intellectuals and representatives of petty-bourgeois strata, primarily young people, and only a handful of workers. The process of the unification of the working-class movement with socialism and with it the process of the political separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie had only just started. The Indian working class was extremely heterogeneous in terms of its national, caste, religious and ethnic composition. Literacy was at a low level and a considerable portion of the workers were still connected with the peasant economy.

The petty-bourgeois intellectuals who made up the nucleus of the communist groups had weak links with the working-class and peasant movement and many of them lacked the necessary experience of political struggle and work among the masses. At times their analysis of reality was purely subjective. Coupled with inadequate experience and theoretical grounding their sincere fidelity to revolutionary ideals caused them to arrive at ultra-radical decisions, which, in spite of their noble nature, were, unfortunately, unrealistic. The disenchantment with compromises by Gandhi and the Congress leadership, which was bound to emerge in these circumstances, made them believe that an alliance with the National Congress in the struggle against the imperialists was out of the question. Yet the Congress was a fairly broad national front organisation which included political forces of diverse trends and did not preclude a struggle of ideas and the propaganda of views running counter to the platform of Gandhi and the Congress leadership.

The one-sided assessments of the country's political situation were also largely due to the fact that many leftists, including proletarian-revolutionary circles in India proper and elsewhere, failed to understand the role which Gandhi played. They did not perceive that Gandhi was the connecting link between the Indian National Congress and the broad popular masses, that he was a national leader whose whole life was an embodiment not only of the line of the Indian national bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist movement, but also an utopian ideal of justice which was the

object of the spontaneous aspiration of the masses, and the striving of the entire nation for independence.

The sectarian errors in defining the role played by the Indian national bourgeoisie are well known, and beginning with the 20th CPSU Congress have been comprehensively criticised in Marxist literature. Less attention was paid to characterising the class essence of Gandhism, and not only as a policy but also as an ideology. The Theses of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern on the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonial countries noted that at first Gandhism was a radical petty-bourgeois ideological movement, which, as a result of its service to the big bourgeoisie, turned into a bourgeois nationalist-reformist movement.¹

In its appraisal of Gandhism, the Programme of the Comintern adopted at its Sixth Congress, chiefly concentrated on the reactionary and utopian aspects of this ideology, and took no notice of its positive, anti-imperialist features. It was believed that in the course of the development of the national liberation revolution Gandhism had already turned into a reactionary force and, consequently, it was necessary to wage a determined struggle against it.²

There is a direct connection between the assertion that the Indian national bourgeoisie was reactionary and the estimation of the class nature of Gandhism as a system of views. Prior to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern Marxist literature mainly noted the petty-bourgeois nature of Gandhism. And this was in line with the idea that the petty-bourgeois sections of the Indian population were closely connected with the national bourgeoisie throughout the entire period of the national liberation struggle against British rule. But inasmuch as the national bourgeoisie was regarded as a reactionary force, and the petty bourgeoisie was still taken to be a revolutionary force, they, naturally, implied to be in opposite camps. And if the links between Gandhi and Gandhism, on the one hand, and the national bourgeoisie, on the other, were believed to be inviolable, this

¹ *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 88, December 12, 1928, p. 1668.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, No. 92, December 31, 1928, p. 1766.

logically relegated the petty-bourgeois features of Gandhism to oblivion.

Yet the ideology of Gandhism underwent no substantial change. It was assessed exclusively on the basis of the tactics employed by Gandhi and the National Congress. The negative attitude to the tactics of the Congress was responsible for the fact that the ideology of Gandhism was identified with reaction. In this connection it became a practice to refer to Gandhist utopian appeals for a return to the so-called golden age of India. Though definitely reactionary, the utopian appeals for a return to moribund social formations, under the specific conditions of struggle against foreign oppression can and more than once did play a progressive role. Gandhism was no exception. The appraisal of the national bourgeoisie as a reactionary force inaugurated an attitude of disregard for petty-bourgeois elements in the ideology of Gandhism, i.e., for its most popular and progressive aspects which were anti-imperialist and profoundly democratic. It was these aspects which for many years evoked an enthusiastic response from the Indian working people and were a source of Gandhi's influence upon the masses.

When criticising appraisals of Gandhi offered by some Marxists at various stages, a very important circumstance should always be borne in mind. Indian and not only Indian Marxists had every reason to believe that the role played by the Indian working class in the liberation movement not only could but should be enhanced in every way, that it could influence the entire movement by its consistent revolutionary attitude towards British imperialist rule in the country. And indeed alongside the peasants, the town-folk, including industrial and railway workers, always constituted the political pivot of the most sweeping organised or spontaneous mass actions of the Indian people against British rule. Life in the country was brought to a standstill by general hartals¹, non-violent Gandhist mass actions, but these were more often than not based on the specifically proletarian form of struggle, namely strikes which took place in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Kanpur, Ahmadabad, Poona, Sholapur, Lucknow and other proletarian centres. These

¹ The closure of shops and concerted work stoppages as a form of protest against British rule in India.

strikes which occurred in the 1930s pursued no aim of the revolutionary overthrow of the colonial system, but they nonetheless paved the way for the transition to an armed struggle of Bombay workers and sailors against the British colonialists. Therefore a critical examination of the one-sided approach to Gandhism on the part of many Marxists ought not to be one-sided itself either. It has to take into account that the gradual but steady growth of the role of proletarian methods of struggle was and still is an historical trend in the Indian national liberation movement. This trend does not mean, of course, that the estimations of the anti-imperialist potentialities of the Indian national bourgeoisie made by many Marxists were actually correct, but it enables one to understand that they were based on the subjective notion that the Indian working class had attained independence simply because it intensified its activity. Meanwhile, the Indian communist vanguard was numerically small, and its influence among the masses was by no means great. In effect the Indian proletariat still remained under the influence of the national bourgeoisie and was to remain for many years to come.

The situation in India on the eve of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern indicated that the national movement was on the upsurge again. The crisis brought about by the defeat of the movement in 1922 and Gandhi's one-sided actions was being overcome, and Gandhi and the Indian National Congress with the support of the masses were preparing another offensive against imperialism. The impressive mass campaign of civil disobedience of 1930 was approaching. The course of events disproved the notion that Gandhi and the National Congress were fully discredited in the eyes of the masses and forfeited their trust.

But as regards the attitude to the united anti-imperialist front in India and the role of the national bourgeoisie in the liberation struggle, the dominating trends were those which gained the upper hand at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and found their reflection in the proceedings at the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth plenums of the ECCI.

A factor which played an especially important role in defining the attitude to Gandhism was the concept of non-violent resistance (*satyagraha*), one of the most charac-

teristic elements of Gandhi's doctrine. Extensive employment of exclusively non-violent methods was typical of Gandhi's activity. For him this was both a method and an ideal; all other principles of Gandhism were determined by, or connected with, this method in one way or another.

He insisted that non-violence was a key to the solution of all social problems,¹ and an effective means of combating exploitation of man by man, class by class and nation by nation.² Naturally enough, the propagation of non-violence under conditions of particularly bitter class battles during the world economic crisis of 1929-33, was viewed mainly as an antithesis of the revolutionary struggle, as a means which the national bourgeoisie could and did use to hold up the liberation movement and the class struggle when they attained the peak of intensity. But in spite of the intentions proclaimed by its inspirer *satyagraha* became an effective political weapon in the struggle against India's enslavers, and as such did merit neither unconditional rejection, nor unconditional support, but only an historical approach and a dialectical evaluation depending on concrete circumstances.

Gandhi and especially some of his followers quite often proceeded from the assertions of superficial and clumsy critics of Marxism that Marxists always and everywhere championed only and armed, bloody, violent struggle. They are ignorant of the dialectics of the forms of struggle inherent in Marxism. Just as ridiculous is the claim that Marxism is in principle against non-violent methods of resisting the colonialists and imperialists. Marxists are not against non-violent resistance as such; they are against absolutising it and turning it into a dogma, against its religious substantiation, against references to the authority of sacred writings, mysticism and feelings of resignation and preparedness to sacrifice oneself for the sake of an imaginary moral re-education of the colonialists.

In general Marxism does not absolutise any particular form of struggle. It proceeds from the assumption that the

¹ Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi. The Last Phase*, Ahmadabad, 1958, Vol. II, p. 141.

² S. Abid Husain, *The Way of Gandhi and Nehru*, London, 1953, pp. 36-37.

merits of every form should be rated depending on the concrete historical situation, and that, consequently, means that a change in the situation legitimately necessitates a reappraisal of the form of struggle. Marxism favours a continuous enrichment and renovation of the forms of struggle, a continuous and flexible change of the methods of revolutionary struggle. It opposes the blind emulation of the experience of some countries by other countries in which the conditions of struggle differ considerably. It favours the correct employment of the best, tested and more effective forms of struggle devised by all revolutionary movements in all countries. In a word, Marxism favours the employment of all forms of struggle, peaceful and non-peaceful, provided they are consistent with the interests of social progress and the ideals of freedom, peace, security and independence of the peoples from imperialism.

Historical experience shows that claims to the effect that Marxists prefer only violent, armed forms of struggle are totally groundless. Genuine Marxism also successfully employs diverse forms of non-violent resistance ranging from hunger strikes by individuals to mass non-cooperation, but only as an instance in the change of the forms of the anti-imperialist and class struggle, as a manifestation of the infinite diversity of the means of the revolutionary movement, from legal protests to armed uprising, the highest form of class struggle which is employed when the class which is the vehicle of the revolution has no choice other than to use armed force against the organised counter-revolutionary violence of the exploiters, colonialists and imperialists.

All the methods of *satyagraha* in themselves can definitely yield positive results and attest to Gandhi's outstanding skill both in perfecting and developing these methods and making them an instrument of mass action.

Indeed, if considered apart from its religious, mystical and metaphysical roots, Gandhi's *satyagraha* is in fact a form of a non-violent mass anti-colonial struggle. It offers considerable opportunities in mobilising and moulding public opinion and to an extent has an offensive anti-imperialist nature. In this capacity *satyagraha* should be regarded and is in fact used as a means in the national liberation and class struggle. But such employment of *satyagraha*

rules out its absolutisation and if it proves ineffective there should be no search for consolation in the ideas of self-sacrifice. On the contrary, more determined and consistent forms of struggle against imperialism, racialism and colonialism should be adopted.

**THE STRUGGLE OF THE INDIAN COMMUNISTS
FOR UNITED ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT TACTICS
AFTER THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE COMINTERN**

As the national liberation movement developed, it became obvious that the former tactical decisions were unrealistic and had to be revised.

In 1932 the Central Committees of a number of Communist parties sent an open letter to the Indian Communists. They noted that the communist movement in India was falling into isolation and even experiencing a crisis. The letter expressed the view that the attitude of the Indian Communists to the bourgeois-democratic movement should not be confined solely to exposing national reformism, that criticism should be combined with participation in the national movement and work in reformist organisations.¹ A new tactical line was beginning to take shape in the international communist movement, and elements of subjectivism and left sectarianism were being discarded.

In 1933 the Indian Communists decided to broaden their co-operation with other parties in the trade unions. Later on attempts were made to establish contacts with the Socialist Party of the Indian National Congress.

These new trends were developed and approved at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern which emphatically reiterated the necessity for all anti-imperialist forces to unite. It designated the formation of a united anti-imperialist front as the main task for the Communist parties in the colonies and semi-colonial countries. This called for a serious revision of the propositions of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern and implied co-operation with the bourgeois-democratic movement and the need to come to an agreement with its leaders.

The experience of the communist movement in India was criticised at the Seventh Congress in a report by G. Dimitrov

¹ *The Communist International*, 1932, No. 16, pp. 43-44 and others (in Russian).

rov and in the main report on the colonial question delivered by Wang Ming which reflected the Comintern's point of view. Wang Ming said that there were leftist errors in the preceding activity of the Communist Party of India and noted that the work of the Indian Communists was an example of how not to carry on the tactics of the united national front. The programme for joint action with other anti-imperialist forces proposed by the Indian Communists demanded among other things the establishment of an Indian Soviet Republic, confiscation of all lands belonging to the landowners without compensation and a general strike. Such demands, Wang Ming said, went far beyond the limits of the bourgeois-democratic programme. What could serve as a realistic basis for joint action was a struggle against the drop in wages, the lengthening of the working day, etc. He added that sectarianism and dogmatism merely strengthened the influence of Gandhism and reformism.¹

G. M. Dimitrov declared in his report: "In India the Communists must support, extend and participate in all anti-imperialist mass activities, not excluding those which are under national reformist leadership. While maintaining their political and organisational independence, they must carry on active work inside the organisations which take part in the Indian National Congress, facilitating the process of crystallisation of a national revolutionary wing among them, for the purpose of further developing the national liberation movement of the Indian peoples against British imperialism."²

This signified a revival of the Leninist line in the national liberation movement. The need for the unity of action of the Communists and all anti-imperialist forces, including the Indian National Congress, in the struggle for national independence was proclaimed once again.

Noting the importance of co-operating with the Indian National Congress, the Seventh Congress of the Comintern mentioned the desirability of establishing particularly close contacts with its left wing.

In their article on the new tactics of the international

¹ Wang Ming, *The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial Countries*, New York, 1935, pp. 40-43.

² G. Dimitrov, *Op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

communist movement, R. Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley observed that the Indian National Congress could itself be a united front, and advanced a programme for its democratisation.¹

Beginning with 1934-35 the communist movement in India for a fairly long period adhered to the tactics of the united front and co-operation with the Indian National Congress without, however, giving up its criticism of the latter.

In 1936 many members of the Communist Party of India entered the Socialist Party of the Indian National Congress. As a result they rapidly broadened their authority, acquired additional propaganda facilities and could directly influence the policy of the Indian National Congress. The Party's membership and its influence rapidly increased. By 1939 there were twenty Communists in the All-India Committee of the Congress. The obvious successes and increased popularity of the Communist Party were viewed with dissatisfaction and apprehension by the socialist members of the Congress. In 1937 the leadership of the Socialist Party of the Congress published a statement about "subversive activities" of the Communists. Within this party there was an influential trend opposing unity of action with the Communists. One of the leaders of this trend M. R. Masani conducted an active anti-communist campaign.

It can be gathered from the activities of the Indian Communists in that period that they consistently adhered to the principle of unity of all the anti-imperialist forces. In a resolution issued in February 1937, the Central Committee of the Communist Party to India said that the united front should embrace all classes, including large groups of the Indian bourgeoisie and excluding only an insignificant group of the big pro-imperialist bourgeoisie, wealthy landowners and princes.²

Such an understanding of the national front, naturally, led to a reassessment of the role played by Gandhi and his leadership. The Communist Party of India recognised that

¹ See: R. Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley, "The Anti-Imperialist People's Front", *International Press Correspondence*, 1936, Vol. 16, No. 11, pp. 297-300.

² *Communist*, March 1937, p. 18.

Gandhi was a leader who enjoyed the trust of the majority of the nation and capable of heading the union of anti-imperialist forces. And when in 1938 the Congress faced a split after S. Ch. Bose was re-elected President of the Congress and Gandhi and a number of right-wing leaders of the Congress refused to work under his leadership, the Communists came out in support of its unity under Gandhi's leadership. The communist paper *National Front* pointed out that the interests of the anti-imperialist movement demanded united leadership with Gandhi at the head, and not the exclusive leadership of just one wing. This decision did not signify that no more criticism would be levelled at the Gandhian leadership, but was a recognition of Gandhi's "greatest mobilising power" for the anti-imperialist movement.¹

The reappraisal of the role played by Gandhi and his doctrine in the national liberation anti-imperialist revolution was a gradual process, characterised by a desire to make a sober appraisal not only of the negative but also of the positive elements of Gandhism important for the liberation movement. Very interesting in this respect is an article by one of the leaders of the Communist Party of India, S. G. Sardesai, published in 1939. He called for rejection of a purely negative approach to Gandhism and discussed the opportunities it offered in the interests of the national movement. "This necessitates," he wrote, "a very close study of and emphasis on every positive side of Gandhism particularly during its militant anti-imperialist phase between 1919 and 1920.... This is the Gandhism that we have to resurrect, burnish and replenish."² A distinguishing feature of this article was the author's realistic approach to Gandhism, an approach which was consistent with the interests of the national liberation and working-class movement and which made it possible to combine recognition and employment of the democratic elements in the ideology and practice of Gandhism with an effective criticism of its inconsistent and contradictory aspects. Moreover, in this criticism it even proved possible partially to proceed from the

¹ Gene D. Overstreet, Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959, p. 168.

² Gene D. Overstreet, Marshall Windmiller, *Op. cit.*, p. 169.

concepts, traditions and ideals of Gandhism itself. Such criticism could be understood more easily by those sections of the population which followed and are still following Gandhian methods and ideals. Without achieving an understanding with them and without their co-operation a truly mass movement in India is hardly possible.

There is reason to believe that the new attitude to Gandhism which the Indian Communists began to display in 1939 has retained its significance to this day. It goes without saying, however, that the fundamental changes in the situation, the enormous numerical growth of the working class, the influence of the world socialist system, the mounting popularity of socialist ideas in India, the aggravation of the class struggle resulting from the growth of the national monopoly capital, and the fact that the agrarian question is still unresolved—all combine to stimulate the growth and strengthen the cohesion of the foremost socialist forces. For them the socio-economic programme of Gandhism is a matter of history rather than of political practice. At the same time many tested methods of the mass movement which Gandhi employed may prove to be effective and may be used by the adherents of scientific socialism in India in the new conditions.

From 1935 to 1939 the Communist Party of India pursued the united front policy against the background of the opposition of leftist elements who tried to bring the Party back to the policy typical of the communist movement prior to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

Contradictions in the Party became greater after the outbreak of the Second World War. This was due to the tactics of temporisation, persuasion and political bargaining employed by Gandhi and the Congress. In October 1939 the Politbureau of the Communist Party adopted a resolution urging that the military crisis should be used in the interests of the struggle for independence. The plan was to turn *satyagraha* into an uprising against the British authorities. The resolution criticised the indecision and conciliatory stand of the Congress, but insisted that the Communist Party should continue to influence the Congress leadership and refrain from mounting the campaign on its own. In the spring of 1940, however, the Communists severed their con-

tacts with the socialists and the Forward Bloc.¹ The indecision of the Congress, on the one hand, and revolutionary impatience, on the other, sometimes stood in the way of a sober appraisal of the situation. The Communist Party issued a statement saying that it was necessary to rid the national front of bourgeois reformism and isolate the cowardly bourgeoisie. In March 1940 the Communist Party adopted its political manifesto, *The Proletarian Path*, which proposed that the military crisis should be used in two phases in the interests of the revolution: 1) a general strike and refusal to pay taxes and rent; 2) an armed uprising. The colonial authorities responded with severe repressions.

The Indian Communists modified their attitude to war when nazi Germany attacked the USSR and the threat of aggression loomed over India. With the war in its decisive phase, they considered it their internationalist duty to support the struggle of the anti-Hitler coalition, and above all to assist the Soviet Union. Their line ran counter to the policy of the Indian National Congress which, despaired of winning political concessions from the British Empire, in August 1942 adopted a resolution "Get Out of India". This step was to be followed by a mass campaign of disobedience. On a national scale, however, this movement was quickly quashed by the government which arrested all the leaders of the Congress, including Gandhi. The Communist Party continued to support the war effort aimed at routing the main enemy, Hitlerism. At the same time it demanded the release of the Congress leaders and again urged the unity of the national forces.

In pursuing its line the Communist Party acted in keeping with sympathies for the USSR which were widespread in India. Not only the Communists, but many members of the Indian National Congress, too, agreed that the attack on the USSR altered the nature of the war. As regards the actions of the Congress leadership, they were evidently motivated by despair and did not seriously influence the sit-

¹ A political party set up by the prominent leader of the left wing of the Indian National Congress S. Ch. Bose. The Indian Communists co-operated with the Forward Bloc, socialists and other left trends in the Committee for the Consolidation of Left Forces founded in 1937.

uation in the country. Nevertheless, many politicians and fighters of the Indian national liberation movement failed to understand the attitude of the Communist Party of India. They were inclined to interpret the stand of the Indian Communists towards the British military efforts in India as disregard for national interests, rather than the desire to fulfil their internationalist duty and uphold the cause of democracy and socialism in the fight against fascism.

On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that the Communist Party lacked flexibility and underestimated the mood of the masses which sympathetically responded to the appeal of the Congress leadership to boycott Britain's military efforts in India. As a result the Communist Party lost some of the trust it enjoyed among the masses, and its relations with the other quarters in the liberation movement worsened. S. G. Sardesai wrote: "There is not the remotest doubt that the overwhelming majority of Indian patriotic opinion thought that when the country was fighting for independence 'the communists were on the other side'. We paid very dearly for this in the years to come."¹ This policy prevented the Communists from carrying out the united front tactics. Their efforts in 1944 to establish co-operation with Gandhi's help produced no results. Eventually the Communists quit the Congress and in the first years of independence there was a revival of the policy of severing relations with the national movement.

The one-sided views on the ways of the anti-colonial movement were overcome gradually. And in its programme documents adopted in 1951 and 1954 the Communist Party no longer characterised the national bourgeoisie as a purely reactionary force linking its future with imperialism.² On the whole, however, these documents still bore a touch of sectarianism because they did not take all the contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and imperialism into account.³ Only the amendments which were introduced into the Communist Party's programme in April 1956 clearly

¹ S. G. Sardesai, *India and the Russian Revolution*, pp. 99-100.

² Ajoy Ghosh, "New Situation and Our Tasks", *New Age*, 1961, Vol. X, No. 5, pp. 13-14.

³ Ajoy Ghosh, "The Indian Bourgeoisie", *New Age*, 1955, Vol. IV, No. 12, pp. 5-18.

defined the dual role of the Indian bourgeoisie. Without underestimating the inclination of the Indian bourgeoisie towards compromise, the amendments underscored the objective cause of growing contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and imperialism. It was pointed out that these contradictions stemmed from the conflict between imperialism and feudalism, on the one hand, and the requirements of India's economic growth, on the other.¹ In order to take account of the contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and imperialism and feudal reaction it was necessary to adopt a differentiated approach and to take advantage of all the opportunities offered by the general democratic movement.

The changes introduced into the programme of the Communist Party of India modified its attitude to Gandhism. In their books on the problems of Gandhism, the Indian Communists E.M.S. Namboodiripad and Hiren Mukerjee interpret Gandhi's historical role in accordance with the assessment of the part of the national bourgeoisie in the liberation movement contained in latest programme documents of the CPI. It is interesting to note that the Indian Communists once again underscored non-bourgeois features of Gandhi's ideology which were responsible for his contradictions, particularly acute in the last years of his life, with the bourgeois leaders of the Congress. In 1958, the communist *New Age* conducted a discussion, "Sarvadaya² and Communism", on its pages. The discussion brought forth acute criticism of Gandhi's social utopias and also of the narrow nature (even from Gandhist positions) of the movement of his follower Vinoba Bhave.³ At the same time it was emphasised that the Communists and Gandhi's true followers could co-operate, that their humanistic aspirations had certain common aspects, that they were loyal to the ideals of social justice, and so forth.

¹ *Ibid.*

² Universal prosperity.

³ Vinoba Bhave was accepted as the most loyal disciple of Gandhi's thanks to the campaign for the non-violent redistribution of land. The practical results of the movement were insignificant.

THE SOCIAL ROOTS OF GANDHISM

It is both instructive and interesting to study how Indian Marxists-Leninists and the Comintern shaped their attitude to Gandhi and Gandhism.

There were several reasons behind the subjective assessments of Gandhism which found their expression first in M. N. Roy's erroneous tactical line, and then in the attitude of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. In a number of countries, including India, the national bourgeoisie has proved its ability to be the leader of the anti-imperialist movement. Needless to say this has not precluded the inclination towards conciliation and class narrow-mindedness on the part of the bourgeois leadership which wanted to curb the revolutionary movement of the masses, turn it into an exclusively anti-imperialist struggle and prevent it from developing into an agrarian revolution and a struggle for the social emancipation of the working people. In India this tendency manifested itself with particular force and resulted in the employment chiefly of non-violent forms of the anti-imperialist movement. While still fighting British imperialism, the Indian bourgeoisie was already beginning to think about its future confrontation with the Indian proletariat, and quite naturally, tried to prevent the anti-colonial movement from growing into a socialist revolution. The Indian national bourgeoisie sought to scare its imperialist adversary with the possibility of the mass movement switching over to an agrarian revolution which it itself feared, and yet refrained from closing a deal with imperialism against the people. In other words, the Indian bourgeoisie managed to act in behalf of the whole nation in the liberation movement. It relied on Gandhism and took advantage of the weakness of the working class and its vanguard to guide this movement as it thought fit. But although the Indian national bourgeoisie used Gandhism in its struggle, that doctrine cannot be regarded merely as an objective expression of the interests of the class of the national bourgeoisie. It goes without saying, of course, that the bourgeoisie would not have exploited Gandhism if it did not reflect its fundamental political objectives, namely the liquidation of the rule of British imperialism by non-violent means and

the establishment of the rule of the Indian National Congress. However, Gandhism was much broader than the positions and interests of the Indian national bourgeoisie in the liberation movement. It was a product of the Indian national liberation movement as a whole, of all participating classes, and mirrored its contradictory many-faceted, socially heterogeneous nature.

Gandhism embodied the dream of social justice in forms typical of the Indian peasantry, and here its ideal, although utopian, was nevertheless clearly anti-bourgeois in character. Its social ideals were a sincere repudiation of the capitalist system from the standpoint of a peasant who had not yet lost its identification with rural community and opposed not only concrete manifestations of social injustice and concrete hostile class forces—moneylenders, merchants, landowners, monopolies, foreign rulers—but also instinctively and spontaneously opposed the entire trend of historical development, the progress of machine technology which frightened his imagination, the expansion of market economic links which he did not understand and which led to the collapse of communal life. Admittedly, this anti-capitalism was utopian and, owing to its religious and non-violent nature, it was doubly non-revolutionary. It was anti-capitalism from the positions of religious morality, from the positions of the oppressed class which was unaware of its mission in the revolutionary transformation of the world and which had as yet failed to see that the numerically small and weakly organised urban working class was its natural ally and leader. Nonetheless, owing to its anti-bourgeois nature and its closeness to the mood of the masses, this peasant, religious and archaic ideal of Gandhism played a major positive role by connecting the broad masses with the liberation movement, filling them with confidence that the aim of this movement was not only to "replace a white bureaucrat with a brown one" as Gandhi used to say, but to implement the principles of social justice, and liberate the people from both foreign political and home-bred social oppression and poverty.

It follows that the ideology of Gandhism embodied the aspirations of the Indian working masses which spontaneously opposed capitalism, but failed to attain the necessary

level of class awareness. Gandhism was possessed of important elements of a general democratic, national liberation movement.

We have already said that the complexity of Gandhism as an historical phenomenon and the complexity of appraising Gandhism were further augmented by the fact that Gandhi was both a "saint" and a "politician", a religious thinker who upheld the humanistic utopian ideal, and a brilliant tactician well versed in all the intricacies of political struggle, a leader of a bourgeois political party. He openly counterposed the ideal of a primitive, patriarchal communal socialism to the patterns of the bourgeois world, and at the same time became the recognised leader of a political organisation whose bourgeois nature was determined by its class leadership and its aims. There was no other organisation which was as powerful and carried as much weight in the country. It cannot be said that Gandhi was oblivious of its bourgeois nature, but he attached primary importance to its anti-imperialist orientation. This was enough for him to become the head of this organisation and, relying on its support, to bring to life a mass movement that was destined to terminate the rule of the British colonialists. But such a contradictory combination led to numerous compromises, deals, agreements and reciprocal influences, in fact, to a sort of eclecticism. Compromise, which was one of the leading principles of Gandhi's political activity (a prolonged compromise with the Indian national bourgeoisie in particular), is also a typical feature of petty-bourgeois ideology. Thus the petty-bourgeois aspects of Gandhian ideology were obscured and, at a certain stage of the struggle for independence, relegated to second place by Gandhi's co-operation with the bourgeois leadership of the Indian National Congress. Nevertheless the links of Gandhism with the interests of the national bourgeoisie were much more complicated and contradictory than what was imagined before the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, and in 1940s and the first half of the 1950s. The national bourgeoisie and Gandhi co-operated very closely in the national movement at a certain stage of its development. There was much that brought them together, and not only the common national struggle for independence, but a deeper and more organic kinship which

frequently enabled them to find points of contact between the bourgeois and the petty-bourgeois peasant ideology and which determined the objectively bourgeois nature of utopian peasant socialism. It was not accidental that Gandhian methods of non-violent resistance rooted in the specific Hindu-nurtured psychology of a member of a peasant community or an individual immersed in spiritual self-perfection proved to be consistent with the stand of the national bourgeoisie in the liberation movement. Yet Gandhi's line and that of the national bourgeoisie were not identical. They were characterised not only by common points but also by contradictions, and constituted distinct rather than identical elements in the general pattern of the democratic movement. It was quite natural, therefore, that the perennial differences between Gandhi and representatives of the bourgeois National Congress became especially acute when the national bourgeoisie came to power thus attaining the goal the struggle for which constituted the objective foundation of its alliance with the peasant utopian.

Obviously it would have been more correct to characterise Gandhism as a profoundly national ideology expressing the utopian aspirations of peasant equality which the Indian bourgeois exploited during the national liberation struggle and is continuing to exploit, but now only in its narrow class interests. Such an appraisal would have made it possible more comprehensively and objectively to take into account the role played by different social strata in the liberation movement and the present stage of India's development.

Closely connected with the petty-bourgeois utopian nature of Gandhian concepts is another feature that ensured its influence, strength and viability, and which is also underestimated by some of Gandhi's critics. It is Gandhi's fidelity to historical and national traditions, his thorough knowledge of the habits and inclinations of the masses, and his unsurpassed ability to proceed from them and to use them without frightening the masses with incomprehensible and seemingly alien innovations. His utopian, peasant ideal of equality and his method of non-violent resistance proved to be so effective because he saw that they were forms of participation in a political movement that were within the reach

of the masses. These forms required no special training and conformed to the ancient national traditions and the psychology of the Indian peasant which evolved in the course of centuries and millennia.

One of the key sources of the influence of Gandhism on the masses was its organic links with traditions which are so durable in India. It was the inadequacy of these links that detracted from the ability of the Indian Marxists to influence the course of the liberation movement. S. G. Sardesai wrote on this score: "But there was hardly any effort to present the growing Indian communist movement as a continuity of the progressive, radical and revolutionary thought currents and popular movements in India going back to centuries and, indeed, thousands of years.

India has no dearth of such traditions and that, too, in every sphere of life and activity—social, political, scientific, cultural and philosophical. But we neglected studying and bringing them out."¹

There is yet another important circumstance which influenced the assessment of Gandhism by left-wing circles, namely their extremely rigid attitude to non-violence which, owing to a number of factors, was regarded as synonymous of reaction. Therefore, criticism of Gandhism rested on repudiation of the principle of non-violence. However, it is possible to adopt a more differentiated attitude to the Gandhian principle of non-violence. It has its metaphysical, religious doctrines and is connected with ascetic disregard for earthly life, with preparations for life in the next world, and proclaims all violence a sin. Therefore it was used by the Indian National Congress and Gandhi himself to curb the revolutionary energy of the masses, particularly when it overstepped the limits fixed by the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. But it also has a realistic, rational idea of peaceful mass forms of anti-imperialist, anti-racialist and anti-feudal struggle and peaceful methods of carrying out social transformations. This idea, which Marxists, of course, can in no way absolutise, has certain revolutionary potentialities under specific historical conditions. It should be

¹ S. G. Sardesai, *Op. cit.*, p. 61.

noted that the political theory and even more so, the practice of Gandhism involve fairly broad methods of mass struggle transcending the bounds of petitionary campaigns and limited constitutional actions. These peaceful methods acquired a universal and militant character, they were instrumental in rapidly revolutionising the situation and placing the British colonialists in an extremely difficult situation.

Criticism of the Gandhian principle of non-violence would have probably been more effective, if, on the one hand, it was concentrated against the religious metaphysical and ascetic aspects of non-violence and the absolutisation of this principle, and, on the other, took into account its inherent revolutionary potentialities. Gandhi never used these potentialities to the full, because they opened prospects for a revolutionary development of events which would sweep away the obstacles created by religious and class narrow-mindedness.

A negative attitude to Gandhism never contributed to the development of the socialist movement in India, whereas a combination of principled criticism with recognition of Gandhi's historical service to the national liberation movement produced much better results. This is true both from the point of view of strengthening the influence of Marxism and from the point of view of enhancing the effectiveness of the criticism of Gandhism, its harmful religious illusions, inconsistency and bourgeois compromises.

Now more than 30 years after Gandhi's death in the course of which the Indian and the international working-class and communist movement has made tremendous headway it is easy to see the past errors and shortcomings which, moreover, have already been rectified.

It was much more difficult to do this in the course of the national liberation struggle. Today, it is universally recognised that the Indian people won political independence by employing both Gandhian and non-Gandhian methods, and that consequently all anti-imperialist forces, including the Communist Party of India, contributed to struggle. Objectively speaking Gandhi and the Indian Communists for a long period of time fought for the common cause whatever the differences and contradictions that existed between them. In 1946 the *Harijan* newspaper published

Gandhi's conversation with a friend concerning the significance of the August 1942 Revolution, i.e., of the uprisings and the seizure of power in some parts of the country which took place under the guidance of left forces, mainly socialists, after the Indian National Congress had adopted the resolution "Get Out of India". "Are you of the opinion then," asked the friend, "that the August revolution caused a setback in the struggle for independence; that all the heroism and courage which our people showed in the course of it was useless?"

"No," replied Gandhi. "I do not say that. In the historical process, the country will be found to have advanced towards freedom through every form of struggle, even through the August upheaval."¹ This is an honest recognition of reality without any political sympathies or antipathies.

But in the course of the struggle and political controversies Gandhi, not to mention some of his associates in the Indian National Congress, sometimes displayed a certain addiction to exaggeration and in his assessments of his political opponents did not take the political perspective into account. For instance, in 1925 Gandhi said that he regarded the activity of the revolutionaries as "positively harmful and dangerous".² There were times when the Communist Party of India wanted to co-operate with the National Congress but encountered a lack of understanding on Gandhi's part. In 1944 the Communists made an attempt to restore their relations with the Congress, which were disrupted during the war, and approached Gandhi on this matter. But he took no steps to meet their offer. Political contradictions and the reluctance to let the Communists enhance their influence on the masses got the better of the objectively existing community of interests between the Communist Party and the Indian National Congress. Gandhi adopted a decision which coincided with the stance of the Congress' bourgeois leadership, and not only worsened the position of the Indian Communists but created fresh obsta-

¹ M. K. Gandhi, "Sabotage and Secrecy", in: M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violence in Peace & War*, Vol. 2, Ahmadabad, 1949, p. 3.

² M. K. Gandhi, "My Friend The Revolutionary", in: M. K. Gandhi, *Young India. 1924-1926*, New York, 1927, p. 909.

cles on the difficult road of the unification of the anti-imperialist forces of the Indian society.

Indian Communists and Marxists in a number of countries, including the Soviet Union, who studied the problems of Gandhism and the national liberation movement, openly and unreservedly acknowledged their errors and took all the necessary steps to remedy the harm caused to the democratic movement in India by a sectarian appraisal of Gandhism. But many active politicians regarding themselves Gandhists have made no reappraisal of the activity of the Marxists, the role played by the Marxist-Leninist ideology in the anti-imperialist movement, and their place in the country's contemporary democratic movement. On the contrary, political leaders and scholars who call themselves Gandhists sometimes use the name of the great Indian patriot and fighter Mahatma Gandhi to further their anti-communist objectives.

A case in point are two works by Satindra Singh which have a direct bearing on the topic under discussion. They are *Gandhi in Communist Kaleidoscope* and *Mahatma in the Marxist Mirror*¹ (the latter work was approved by Rajagopalachari, a prominent Indian politician known for his extreme rightist and anti-communist views). In these works Singh examines the approach towards Gandhism by the Communist Party of India, the Comintern and the views expounded in communist literature (in India, Britain and the USSR) concerning Gandhism. He proceeds from impermissibility of any criticism of Gandhi and his contradictory political activity, and admits no objective connection between Gandhi's activity and the interests of the national bourgeoisie. He assumes that Gandhi was infallible and any criticism levelled at him strikes back at the critic because of the vast respect which Gandhi justly enjoys among the people.

Underscoring the sectarian appraisal of Gandhi and ignoring the positive aspects of Marxist criticism of Gandhism, Singh seeks to create the impression that the delusions of

¹ See: Satindra Singh, "Gandhi in Communist Kaleidoscope", *Thought*, New Delhi, May 17, 1958; Satindra Singh, *Mahatma in the Marxist Mirror*, Delhi, 1962.

some researchers were not caused by an intense search for a correct revolutionary line in the national liberation movement, but by considerations totally divorced from national interests. Drawing on relatively numerous facts he presents them in a way that fans hostility towards the Indian Communists rather than contributes to the restoration of the historical truth. Consequently, he places fresh obstacles to the unity of the democratic anti-imperialist forces, for which he is inclined to blame the Communists.

Singh portrays communism as an irreconcilable enemy of Gandhi's humanistic ideals. His anti-communism has very little in common with Gandhism. Certain critical remarks by Gandhi concerning the October Socialist revolution, Bolshevism, the building of socialism in the USSR, and the communist movement in India were a logical consequence of the absolutisation of the principle of non-violence. At the same time, however, he welcomed the communist ideal based on the abolition of private property, admired the heroism and utter dedication of the Soviet people, and did justice to the courage of the Indian Communists and their fidelity to their ideas.

Contradictions between Gandhism and Marxism are unavoidable. But this does not mean that Marxists and Gandhi's true disciples who have retained their teacher's lofty ideals, should stand at the opposite poles of the anti-imperialist struggle, that there are no, nor can there be, any points of contact in their fight against the common enemies, and not only against the colonialists, but also against neocolonialists and Indian monopolists who want to subjugate India and exploit its people. Marxists fight against harmful utopias of solidarity of the antagonistic classes, of the self-sacrifice of the working class and the peasantry for the sake of moral perfection of the capitalists and landowners, against the inconsistency of Gandhism and its inclination towards compromise. But they welcome Gandhi's humanistic ideal even though it cannot be achieved only with the help of Gandhian methods. Condemnation of capitalist and feudal exploitation, the desire to work for a better future for the working people, the organisation of mass movements in forms that were discovered and tested by Gandhi can, in spite of the different approach to them, serve as a basis for

co-operation of all left-wing democratic forces in India. From time to time this fact is also recognised by Gandhi's faithful disciples.

Today political developments in India imperatively call for the unification of all democratic forces in order to resist imperialism, neocolonialism and internal reaction. All honest followers of Gandhi, people who are prepared to employ non-violent methods in the struggle to abolish exploitation and improve the working people's living standards will find their place in this united front.

Gandhism is not a subject which could be approached from purely academic positions. It is still an acute problem of present-day political life. An analysis of the Comintern's historical experience shows that any assessment of Gandhism, as of any other complex phenomenon of the national liberation movement, can be correct both scientifically and tactically only if it helps to promote and strengthen a truly democratic movement and to build up a broad united front of all democratic and progressive social forces in India.

THE COMINTERN AND THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN VIETNAM

I. A. OGNETOV

In Vietnam the national liberation movement in the 1920s developed under the impact of the ideas of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. Following the events in Russia Vietnamese revolutionaries drew the conclusion that they had "to study Marxism-Leninism and to follow the Russian example".¹

Liberation fighters in Vietnam, just as many other revolutionaries in the Eastern countries, assimilated Marxism-Leninism and joined the Communist International after a long struggle which they waged under the banner of revolutionary anti-imperialist nationalism. Ho Chi Minh had this stage in view when he wrote: "At first it was precisely my patriotism, and as yet by no means communism that brought me to Lenin and the Communist International. It was only gradually, in the course of the struggle, that I came to realise that only socialism, only communism can liberate the oppressed nations and the working people throughout the world from slavery. I understood what indestructible links connected genuine patriotism and proletarian internationalism."²

Lenin's theses on the national and colonial question adopted by the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920 greatly influenced the formation of Marxist views in Vietnam. "In these Theses, I came across political terms which I understood with great difficulty. But reading and re-reading them many times I managed to grasp their essence.

¹ *Thirty Years of Struggle of the Party*, Hanoi, 1960, p. 18.

² Ho Chi Minh, "My Road to Leninism", *Problems of Orientology*, 1960, No. 2, p. 20 (in Russian).

How this excited, warmed, enlightened and convinced me!... From that moment I firmly took the side of Lenin and the Third International."¹

The founding of the Communist International almost coincided in time with the first actions of the Vietnamese Communists on the political scene. But in the 1920s the Comintern had no direct contacts with the revolutionary movement in Vietnam.

It co-operated and maintained contact with the Vietnamese revolutionaries through its sections, the Communist Parties of France and China. At the same time its ideological, political and organisational influence on the development of the revolutionary movement in Indochina in the 1920s gradually became more and more significant.

Revolutionary ideas made their way into Vietnam through France, upon which Indochina was dependent, and China with which it had long and close links. During the First World War about 100,000 Vietnamese were transported to Europe for service in the French Army and work at the industrial enterprises. These people directly participated in the struggle of the French proletariat. Returning home from France after being demobilised, many of these "Tonkinese riflemen" brought with them ideas of revolutionary struggle and it was they who brought the news of the victorious revolution in far off Russia.

The French Communist Party paid a great deal of attention to propagandising Marxist ideas among the natives of colonial countries both in the colonies and in France. The Central Committee of the French Communist Party set up a special body to promote the revolutionary movement in the French colonies. By 1922 the Party was issuing several dozen newspapers and journals many of which were circulated in Vietnam. Some progressive newspapers in Saigon reprinted articles from French communist publication. In 1925 *Annam* published the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels, the first Marxist work to be printed in Vietnamese.

Among the first Vietnamese who went through the school of proletarian internationalism in the ranks of the French

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Communist Party were Ho Chi Minh (Nguyen Ai Quoc), Ton Duc Thang, Bui Lam (Nguyen Xich), Duong Bach Mai, Bui Cong Trung, Nguyen Van Tao and many others. Nguyen Van Tao was elected member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, and Ho Chi Minh, who was a member of the Party attended the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in Moscow in 1924.

The colonial authorities made every effort to prevent the ideas of liberation from penetrating into Indochina and to disrupt the links between the French Communists and the national independence movement. However, they failed in their attempts. Moreover, the Governor General of Indochina, Merlin, admitted that for the Vietnamese the "road to France" was in fact a "road against France", i.e., against the France of the colonialists.

The national liberation struggle in Vietnam during French rule was connected in many respects with the development of the revolutionary movement in China. At the beginning of the 20th century Vietnamese revolutionary democrats thoroughly studied the experience of Chinese enlighteners, revolutionaries and bourgeois democrats.

At the end of the 1920s the first Vietnamese Marxist groups were organised in China. Alongside, there were also a number of nationalist organisations where the first Vietnamese Communists carried on political education.

The Comintern paid a great deal of attention to the question of training cadres of communist revolutionaries for the countries of the East. The Communist University of the Toilers of the East was set up in Moscow and the first group of Vietnamese professional revolutionaries arrived there from France in 1923 and 1924. They studied the theory of scientific communism and saw how Lenin's doctrine was being translated into reality in the Soviet Union.

In March 1924 Ho Chi Minh published a special article about the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in *La Vie ouvrière*. "Revolutionary Russia," he wrote, "has never hesitated to come to the help of peoples awakened by its heroic and victorious revolution. One of its important acts was the founding of the University of the East.... It can be said without exaggeration that under the roof of

this University is the future of the colonial peoples."¹

The Comintern carried on extensive training of cadres of Vietnamese revolutionaries and provided them with all-round assistance via China. Soviet specialists who worked as advisers in revolutionary China contacted progressive Vietnamese leaders, among them Phan Boi Chau, a representative of the revolutionary democratic wing of the national liberation movement, and arranged for young Vietnamese to go to study in Moscow.²

A distinguishing feature of the relations taking shape between the Comintern and the communist movement in Vietnam in the 1920s was that the Vietnamese Communists joined the Comintern as members of the French Communist Party and not as representatives of an independent Communist Party of Indochina for the simple reason that it did not exist at the time. In that period the Vietnamese revolutionaries trained at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East or at the Chinese revolutionary military academy at Wampoa, were preparing to work directly in the country and form a Marxist-Leninist party of the working class. The activity of Ho Chi Minh, Tran Phu, Le Hong Phong and other revolutionaries and their contacts with Communists in Russia, France and China in many ways contributed to the emergence of close links between the Vietnamese revolution and the world communist and working-class movement.

The decisions of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern (July-August 1924) prompted the Communist parties to increase their assistance to the national liberation movement in the colonies. Ho Chi Minh, who presented an analysis of the situation in the colonies, noted that the European Communist parties had to establish effective contact with the masses in dependent and colonial countries because only such a policy was consistent with the requirements of Leninism. "We must adopt concrete measures," he said. "I propose the following points:

¹ Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Hanoi, 1960, pp. 80-81, 83.

² See: Phan Boi Chau, *Tu Phe Phan*, (Self-criticism), Hanoi, 1960, p. 204 (in Vietnamese); G. F. Kim, F. I. Shabshina, *Proletarian Internationalism and Revolutions in the Countries of the East*, Moscow, pp. 201-202 (in Russian).

"4.— To publish in *l'Humanité* a new feature of at least two columns weekly devoted to regular coverage of colonial questions.

"2.— To increase propaganda and choose Party members among the natives of the colonial countries in which there are already branches of the Communist International.

"3.— To send comrades from the colonial countries to study at the Eastern Communist University in Moscow."¹

Observing that poverty and discontent were increasing in all French colonies, he said that there was no leadership which could stand at the head of the movement of these "now passive" peasants. "The International should help these unfortunate peasants to organise; the International should give them leaders. The International should show them the way to revolution and emancipation."²

After the Fifth Congress of the Comintern the Vietnamese Communists began propaganda activity in patriotic revolutionary organisations. This work was carried on not in Vietnam but in the southern provinces of China where these organisations had their headquarters and separate groups. For instance, the first Vietnamese Communists conducted political education among the members of the Tam tam-xa (Group of the Like-Minded). Established in Kwangchow (Canton) in 1924 this group intended to conduct terroristic activity against the French colonial authorities in Indochina. It conducted propaganda among the Vietnamese soldiers to prepare them for an armed uprising. The Communists explained the significance of the October Revolution, the role played by the Communist International and the substance of the ideas of socialism and communism to the members of this organisation. "As a result many members of this organisation renounced terroristic methods of struggle, and expressed their wish to go to Soviet Russia to study the victorious experience of the October Revolution and find a genuinely revolutionary path for their people."³

In 1925 the Vietnam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association was formed on Chinese territory on Ho Chi

¹ Ho Chi Minh, *Op. cit.*, p. 148.

² *International Press Correspondence*, 1924, No. 55, p. 578.

³ Truong Chinh, *Eternally Living*, Hanoi, Part I, p. 10 (in Vietnamese).

Minh's initiative, and became an assembly centre for Vietnamese forces gravitating towards the Communists. Although the Association did not participate in the Comintern it tried to follow its decisions and set itself the task of spreading Marxist-Leninist ideas in Vietnam, winning national independence, overthrowing the rule of imperialism and building communist society.

The Vietnam Workers' Party assessed the formation of the Association in the following terms: "For the first time, Marxist-Leninist viewpoints of class struggle, the role of the people in history, etc... were disseminated in Vietnam. Thanks to this propaganda, a Communist group took shape in this organisation [Vietnam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association—*Ed.*]"¹

As distinct from the other revolutionary Vietnamese organisations of the period, the Association devoted the most serious attention to work among the working masses. Many of its members went to factories and other industrial enterprises to guide the struggle of the workers there. As a result, in addition to the previously formed trade unions and workers' mutual aid associations, the first communist organisations—groups of members of the Vietnam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association—were set up. Between 1926 and 1928 members of the Association played a prominent part in workers' actions in all more or less large economic centres and regions of the country. There were strikes at the cement factory in Haiphong, a textile mill in Nam Ding, at the Avia Factory in Hanoi, at Saigon enterprises, plantations in Phu Dien and elsewhere. The workers demanded better living conditions, a shorter working day, abolition of corporal punishment, etc.

The Association believed that one of its main tasks was to unite the truly revolutionary forces under the banner of Marxism-Leninism. And here an important role was played by its underground *Thanh-nien* ("Youth") newspaper.² A vivid example of how the Association fought for the unity of action of all revolutionary forces in Vietnam was its efforts to foster close co-operation with the petty-bour-

¹ *Thirty Years...*, pp. 19-20.

² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

geois Revolutionary Party of New Vietnam. This organisation proclaimed that it worked for the establishment of a republican system in Vietnam as a stage on the road to communism. Although these two organisations never managed to establish close co-operation (through no fault of the Association) many members of the Revolutionary Party of New Vietnam renounced the sectarian views of its leadership and joined the Association.

A survey of the Association's activity shows that it followed the decisions of the Comintern and tried to emulate the more mature Communist parties in other countries. But owing to lack of experience the revolutionaries of the Association and members of its communist faction were unable to assume leadership of the working-class movement in the country, which until 1929 was spontaneous and largely influenced by petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. The better trained and more experienced Communists in the Association, chiefly from North Vietnam, became more and more aware of the need to form a Communist party. The Sixth Congress of the Comintern strengthened their belief that this had to be done. For the first time Vietnamese Communists (three delegates) attended a Comintern Congress directly as representatives of the Indochinese revolutionary movement. In his speech at the Congress one of the representatives, An (Nguyen Van Tao), analysed the situation in the country and spoke of the intensification of colonial exploitation and the growing discontent of the working masses. He specifically pointed out that the Indochinese peasantry was an important factor for the future revolutionary movements. Characterising the situation in Indochina he overestimated the influence of proletarian ideology in it. He declared that the Vietnamese masses "have turned away from their bourgeoisie which openly displays its counter-revolutionary substance".¹ But in 1928 Vietnam did not yet have a united Communist party; there were serious differences between the communist groups, and the petty-bourgeois national party Quoc Dan Dang enjoyed a certain degree of authority among the urban working strata, the intel-

¹ *Verbatim Report of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern*, Issue 4, Moscow, 1930, pp. 246-47 (in Russian).

ligentsia and particularly the soldiers. Under these circumstances it was too early to talk about the masses turning away from the bourgeoisie and to qualify the latter as a counter-revolutionary force. In terms of its political aspirations the Vietnamese bourgeoisie was not homogeneous, and some of its strata in no way "openly displayed their counter-revolutionary substance" at the time.

The rightist and leftist errors of the leadership of the Communist Party of China were exposed at the Congress. The discussions which took place and the resolutions adopted by the Congress were of great significance for the Vietnamese Communists because they prompted them to adopt a sober attitude to the CPC's experience. The Vietnamese delegate emphasised the need to create a Communist party in Indochina. He said that in spite of serious revolutionary unrest among the workers, peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the revolutionary mass was still unorganised and therefore helpless. "We must have a revolutionary organisation, which would be the vanguard of the Indochinese revolutionary movement," he said. "The Comintern should pay special attention to the question of forming the Indochinese Communist Party and study the problem of organising labour and peasant unions. Only this will offer the Vietnamese workers and peasants a chance to win full freedom.... We base all our hopes on the world proletariat, particularly on the proletariat of France and China, and on the Third International."¹

At the time the Vietnam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association was the most active, numerous and influential organisation of Indochinese revolutionaries. Its First Congress took place in early May 1929 in Hsiangkang. On the initiative of the North Vietnamese delegation a discussion concerning the formation of a united Communist party was made one of the main points on the agenda. But no progress was made on the issue. The North Vietnamese delegation walked out and the Congress continued without it.

The Congress adopted a number of decisions which were not free of sectarian views. It also issued a Manifesto which stated that the Vietnamese revolution was closely connected

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 248-49.

with the world revolution. The Association's programme adopted by the Congress noted that the Vietnamese revolution was a bourgeois-democratic one in which the agrarian question played an important role.

In a special address the Congress sent its greeting to the Communist International and announced that it had drafted the Association's programme, strategy and tactics in conformity with the communist teaching. The Congress also expressed the hope that the Comintern would help form a party of true Communists in Indochina.

While the Congress was meeting a campaign to form communist organisations at factories, mines and plantations got under way in North Vietnam. It was initiated by the first communist group of North Vietnam set up in March 1929.¹ Its leaders planned to accept former members of the Association into these organisations but only individually and only those who could be fully trusted. Later, in June 1929, it was announced that the Indochinese Communist Party had been formed. On the basis of the Comintern's Programme the Party formulated a Manifesto which became its programme. Seeing that influence of the Indochinese Communist Party was growing, the General Bureau of the Young Revolutionary Comrades Association decided that same year to transform its organisations (primarily in South Vietnam) into the Communist Party of Annam.

The Revolutionary Party of New Vietnam which operated in Central and South Vietnam also decided to reorganise itself into the Indochina Communist Federation.

"Thus in 1929, three Communist organisations came into being in Vietnam, all claiming to be genuine political parties of the working class and trying by all means to win the recognition of the Communist International. In their activity, propaganda and admittance of new members, these first three Communist organisations indulged in invective against each other and disputed for influence among the masses."²

Now it was necessary to form a united Communist Party of Vietnam. All conditions were on hand for this: the mass strike movement was gaining momentum, the number of

¹ See: Tran Van Giau, *Giai cap cong nhan Vietnam*, p. 436.

² *Thirty Years...*, p. 23.

communist organisations at industrial enterprises was increasing and trained cadres were now available. Accordingly, in October 1929 the ECCI sent a letter to all communist organisations in Vietnam saying that the absence of a united Communist party at a time when the mass movement was on the upgrade in the country seriously endangered the future of the Vietnamese revolution and its ultimate goals and prevented the Communists from assuming leadership of this movement. "Therefore the indecision and indifference displayed by certain groups towards the immediate formation of a Communist party is absolutely erroneous," the ECCI noted.¹

The ECCI offered a concrete plan for the formation of the Communist party and recommendations concerning the structure of its leading bodies. The idea was to set up a united committee of representatives of all communist organisations which would be headed by a representative of the Comintern. It was specially emphasised that the groups comprising the united Communist party would have to accept the Programme, Rules and decisions of the Comintern and carry on practical work among the workers and peasants. It was also pointed out that at least half of the members of the united committee should be functionaries from among the working class.² It would be the committee's responsibility to unite all Communists into a single organisation prior to the party congress. The establishment of party branches at industrial and other enterprises was to be conducted on a broader scale. The letter ended with the recommendation for the future united Communist Party of Vietnam to maintain contact with the French Communist Party, and other fraternal Communist parties, and inform them about its activity.

The Comintern's representative Ho Chi Minh was sent to Hsiangkang in order to give the Vietnamese Communists concrete assistance. He set up a unity commission which decided to convene a special conference of representatives of communist groups in Indochina. Meeting in Hsiangkang in February 1930, representatives of the Indochinese Commu-

¹ *Great Stage in the History of the Vietnamese Revolution*, Hanoi, 1961, p. 69 (in Vietnamese).

² *Ibid.*

nist Party and the Annam Communist Party, following ECCI recommendations unanimously decided to unite communist organisations operating in Indochina into the Communist Party of Vietnam.¹

The conference adopted the programme, strategic plan and concise constitution of the new Party and the constitutions of the Anti-Imperialist Alliance of Indochina and mass organisations. It also formulated a concrete plan for the merger of local communist organisations and elected a provisional Central Committee to exercise overall leadership. The conference decided to promote the development of mass organisations under the Party's guidance, such as the Red trade unions, Red peasant unions, a Communist Youth League, the Anti-Imperialist Alliance and others.

The materials concerning the Comintern's sections, published in 1935, qualified the formation of the Communist Party in Indochina as a highly significant milestone in the history of the revolutionary struggle in Indochina. On the other hand it was also noted that the serious errors were committed in the process of merger. "The unity commission which administered the merger of various communist groups into the united Communist Party made a series of mistakes of which the most important was that the merger was effected without an adequate differentiation and selection of truly revolutionary forces from the existing communist groups. During the ebb of the revolutionary tide some fellow-travellers who joined the Party without being screened carefully enough during the period of upsurge, voiced their defeatist feelings."²

After a close study of the documents of the unity conference the ECCI sent a letter to Vietnam with recommendations concerning the line and the tasks of the Vietnamese revolution. It also raised the question of renaming the Communist Party of Vietnam into the Indochinese Communist Party.

These recommendations formed the basis of the decisions adopted by the First Plenary Meeting of the Central Com-

¹ The Indochina Communist Federation did not have time to send their delegates to the meeting. (*Thirty Years...*, p. 24.)

² *The Communist International Prior to the Seventh World Congress, Moscow, 1935*, p. 484 (in Russian).

mittee of the Communist Party of Vietnam in October 1930. The meeting was chaired by the first General Secretary of the CC Tran Phu. He returned to Vietnam in the spring of 1930 from Moscow where he studied at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. The meeting approved his theses about the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This document pointed out that the bourgeois-democratic revolution had to stamp out the vestiges of feudalism, allot land to the peasants and win full independence for Indochina. Special stress was laid upon the significance of the struggle for Indochina's independence and the interlacing of the two goals—anti-feudal and anti-imperialist—of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The workers and peasants were described as the main motive force of the revolution; and leadership by the Communist Party as the main condition to guarantee its victorious outcome. "Once power is won," it was stated in the Theses, "Indochina will pass over the stage of capitalist development to advance straight to socialism thanks to the assistance of the proletarian dictatorship in the countries where proletarian revolution has been successful".¹ This showed the influence of the theoretical propositions set forth in the Comintern's programme documents.

The Plenary Meeting decided to change the Party's name to the Indochinese Communist Party because "the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian proletariat have politically and economically to be closely related in spite of their difference in language, customs and race".²

The Meeting also adopted a resolution making it incumbent on all those joining the Party to follow the decisions of the Comintern, the Party's theses and political programme and also the propositions of the main documents on the Party's reorganisation and Bolshevisation.

* * *

The Indochinese Communist Party started off in difficult conditions. An uprising of servicemen guided by the National Party of Vietnam broke out in February 1930 in Yen Bai. This was the last action of petty-bourgeois revolution-

¹ *Thirty Years...*, pp. 26-27.

² *Ibid.*, p. 27.

aries. The uprising was defeated and the National Party ceased to play an active role in politics.

The Communist Party mobilised the masses for the struggle against the counter-revolutionary terror that swept the country following the uprising and, at the same time, advanced slogans urging an improvement of the people's standard of living.

In 1930 and 1931 the Communist Party played a significant role in the actions of workers, and proletarian and semi-proletarian strata in the rural areas. Plantation workers at Phu Dien were the first to go on strike under the guidance of the Communists. Then a strike broke out at the Nam Dinh textile mill, one of the country's largest industrial enterprises. A wave of revolutionary action which started on May 1, 1930 swept across the country enveloping industrial enterprises at Hanoi, Haiphong, Saigon, Hon Gai and other towns, and also rural areas in North, Central and South Vietnam.

The revolutionary struggle reached its peak in 1930 and 1931 in the provinces of Nghe An and Ha Tinh where Soviets were established. The peasants of these two provinces who rebelled in September 1930 abolished colonial rule in some districts and established their own order. The Party Committee in the Nghe An Province issued a decree on the formation of Soviets as a form of the local revolutionary authority of workers and peasants. This authority granted democratic freedoms to the people, distributed land among the peasants, encouraged the population to learn to write in the national language, etc.

The colonial authorities employed military, economic and ideological measures to split the movement and win over the vacillating elements to their side, to starve the rebels and liquidate the Soviet districts. With the support of the landowners and the village elite, the colonial authorities created a party of "respectable" villagers (*Ly nhan dang*) which was assigned the task of "fighting against communism and fermenting hatred for the Soviet Union". Catholic clergymen also joined the struggle to crush the uprising and "conducted propaganda among the believers in order to sow dissension and discord".¹ At that time the Party Committee of

¹ *Tieng Phong* ("Vanguard"), December 17, 1931.

Central Vietnam in an attempt to strengthen the ranks of the insurgents put forth the incorrect slogan: "root out all intellectuals, landlords and notables". In practice however, it further aggravated the already difficult situation in the Soviet districts.¹

The Central Committee of the ICP launched a massive campaign throughout the country in support of Nghe An and Ha Tinh, and simultaneously took steps to rectify the errors the Communists committed during the movement for the formation of Soviets. In keeping with the decisions of the Central Committee the Party's policy in the villages was to "strengthen by all means the landless and poor peasants because they are semi-proletarians in the countryside; to unite with middle-peasants because they are for the time being a big revolutionary force and a labouring force which will, together with the working class, build socialism once state power is in the workers' hands".² The CC also said that it was necessary to work among the kulaks so as, without drawing them into the organisations of the village proletariat, not to scare them away from the movement and prevent them from going along with the reaction.

Thus, in the course of class struggle the Vietnamese Communists adjusted their policy to the concrete conditions and tasks of the bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution. Their decisions indicated that they searched for ways towards a united front.

By March 1931 the colonialists had crushed the uprising in Nghe An and Ha Tinh. Today, assessing the lessons of this uprising, the Vietnamese Communists say that it was defeated "due to subjective and adventurous thinking, lack of a thorough understanding of the policy of an anti-imperialist national united front and neglecting to carry out the strategy of 'more friends and less foes', and when the movement was at low ebb 'a withdrawal in good order was not effected'".³

The movement for the establishment of Soviets in 1930 and 1931 was of major significance for the Party's further activity. It brought to light numerous urgent tasks con-

¹ *Thirty Years...*, pp. 34-35.

² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

nected with organisational work, the education and training of the cadres, purging the Party of leftist and rightist fellow-travellers who wavered and distorted the Party's line at the most responsible moments.

In 1935 the Comintern characterised this period in the activity of the Indochinese Communist Party as follows: "In Indochina, the Communist Party having barely taken shape became an important factor on the national scene within an extraordinary short space of time. After the rout of uprising in Yen Bai and as a result of the suppression and internal disintegration of the Indochinese Kuomintang, which stood at the head of this uprising, the Indochinese Communists began to play an increasing role in the anti-imperialist movement. The Indochinese Communist Party managed to give impetus to the working-class movement and connect the slogans of anti-imperialist struggle with the slogans of the agrarian-peasant movement without which it would have been impossible to organise the first Soviets in Indochina."¹

Summing up some of the results of the upsurge of the revolutionary movement in the country, the Second Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (March 1931) set the goal of combatting petty-bourgeois ideas in Party ranks, drafting a plan to strengthen the revolutionary movement and improving the Marxist-Leninist education of Party members. Special emphasis was placed on the need to fight against "leftist" deviation, i.e., against adventurism, spontaneous action and premature uprisings, and, equally, against such rightist trends as trailing in the tail of events, slowing down the pace of the struggle and so forth.

After the suppression of the Nghe An and Ha Tinh uprising the colonial authorities instituted a reign of terror in Indochina.

The members of the Communist Party and people who were in the organisations the Party sponsored were subject to the severest repressions. The slightest incident was blamed on the Communists and used as a pretext for treat-

¹ *The Communist International Prior to the Seventh World Congress, Moscow. 1935, p. 72 (in Russian).*

ing them with the utmost brutality. In addition to this policy of terror the authorities launched a demagogic propaganda campaign and encouraged the formation of all sorts of reactionary religious organisations.

The reaction's onslaught took place at a time when Indochina was in the grip of a severe economic crisis which brought about unemployment, the further impoverishment of the working masses in towns and villages, and ruination of petty-bourgeois elements. In these circumstances the landowners and compradores strengthened co-operation with the colonialists, and the national bourgeoisie displayed abject indecision and proposed "reforms at the top". At the same time petty-bourgeois circles, the intelligentsia in particular, were torn by vacillations and discord.

In late 1931 the revolutionary movement in Indochina began to decline. Almost all members of the Party's Central Committee were arrested and many Party branches were routed. In the summer of 1931 the British authorities in Hsiangkang arrested Ho Chi Minh. The Communist Party's contacts with the Comintern were disrupted. Taking advantage of the situation the Trotskyite group strengthened its influence in the Party, particularly in South Vietnam. The Trotskyites advocated the adventurist course of immediately seizing power, and declared that all those who disagreed should be expelled from the Party as "petty-bourgeois representatives". But the Party fought against both the onslaught of the reaction and the attempts of the Trotskyites to foist an adventurist course upon it. The Party drew up a Programme of Action which was approved by the Comintern the same year.¹ Based on the Programme on the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution which was formulated back in 1930, the Programme of Action confirmed that the strategic goal of the Indochinese Communist Party was the accomplishment of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It also set forth concrete demands designed to mobilise the masses for the struggle under the conditions of the reign of terror. The demands included democratic freedoms for the working people, an end to terror and repression of political prisoners, dissolution of court commissions and military tribunals, etc.

¹ *Thirty Years... , p. 41.*

Between 1932 and 1935 the Indochinese Communists re-established Party organisations and worked against the influence of the remnants of petty-bourgeois organisations and groups. Serious attention was also paid to the theoretical grounding of the Communists, particularly of the Party's leading body. "In that period, the Soviet Communist Party trained many leading cadres for our Party. Comrades Le Hong Phong, Ha Huy Tap and many others were trained in the Soviet Union, and they returned to China and France, seeking means to contact the comrades at home to restore the movement."¹ The Comintern rendered considerable help to the Indochinese Communist Party in reviving the revolutionary movement in that period.

The French Communists vigorously opposed the sanguinary policy of the French imperialists in Indochina. The French Communist Party drew masses of working people into its political campaigns coordinating them with the struggle of the Vietnamese people. This was important support in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. The Vietnamese revolutionaries were supported by the International Red Aid which came out with an appeal to form a delegation to investigate the activities of the colonialists and the consequences of the terror in Indochina. The international protest movement acquired a broad scale. As a result of the pressure by the international working class Ho Chi Minh was wrested from the hands of the British police which were about to hand him over to the French colonialists. The latter had already passed a death sentence *in absentia* on this great son of the Vietnamese people.

The Eleventh Plenum of the ECCI at the end of April 1931 recognised the Indochinese Communist Party as an independent national section of the Comintern. In 1932 the Comintern sent letters to the Indochinese Communists in which it analysed the mistakes made in the movement in 1930 and 1931. In line with a special decision adopted by the Comintern in 1934, a Committee of the Leadership of the Indochinese Communist Party Abroad headed by Le Hong Phong was set up in Aomen. The Committee was to bring in order the organisational system of Party, train Par-

¹ *Thirty Years...*, p. 46.

ty cadres and prepare for a Party congress. Practically it "did the task of a Provisional Central Executive Committee of the Party".¹

In its analysis of the activity of the Indochinese Communist Party the Bureau of the Secretariat of the Comintern noted in 1935: "In these six years the Communist Party has covered a road which in ordinary conditions requires many years."² It also pointed out: "The main tasks facing the Party at the present stage are the restructuring and further strengthening of the illegal organisation and the formation of mass organisations. There were serious shortcomings in this field in the preceding period. Particularly noticeable was the Party's inadequate work in the industrial centres."³

This very serious observation shows that even after 1930 there was a tendency in the Indochinese Communist Party to underestimate the importance of work among the urban proletariat. It was mentioned earlier that in his speech at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern the Indochinese delegate underscored the revolutionary spirit of the Indochinese peasantry and the significance of this factor for the coming revolutionary battles. In such a country as Vietnam it was important to assess correctly the role of the peasants in the revolution without overestimating their revolutionary spirit. In the period under review this premise was of increasing practical significance, and the documents of the First Congress of the Indochinese Communist Party testify to this.

The Congress, convened in March 1935 in Aomen, decided that it was necessary to strengthen and expand the Party's ranks, win over broad masses of working people to its side and involve national minorities, women and soldiers in the revolutionary movement. It also decided to re-establish the Communist Youth League, the trade unions and other organisations. The Congress resolved to launch a campaign for a united anti-imperialist front and to resort to all legal and semi-legal forms of struggle against impe-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

² *The Communist International Prior to the Seventh World Congress*, p. 480.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 484.

rialism. In its documents it noted the need to have the support of the CPSU and the Soviets in China. The Congress elected the Central Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party.

Although the Congress adopted important resolutions, there were certain shortcomings in its work. For example, practically nothing was said on such an important question as the need to combat the fascist threat. The struggle against the imperialist war was dealt with only in general terms. Likewise, nothing was said about promoting a struggle for democratic freedoms and improving the well-being of the masses.

The decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern proved to be of immense significance for the Indochinese Communists. They drew on these decisions in their critical analysis of the errors made in the first years following the formation of the Party. The decisions also proved useful in the evaluation of the changes that had taken place in the country and on the international scene. In line with them the direction and the forms of communist activity were defined throughout the Vietnamese revolution right up to the victory of the August Revolution in 1945 and the War of Resistance in 1954.

The Seventh Congress of the Comintern endorsed the decision of the ECCI to recognise the Indochinese Communist Party as a section of the Communist International.¹ This decision did much to support the communist movement in the country both morally and politically. It was a sign of recognition of the revolutionary maturity of the Indochinese Communist Party which had acquired considerable experience during periods of upsurge and decline of the revolution.

Following the recommendations of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern the leadership of the Indochinese Communist Party took steps to improve upon its political course formulated at the First Congress of the Party. In July 1936, upon the suggestion of Le Hong Phong a meeting of Party cadres who had attended the First Congress was convoked in order to work out a new political course. This meeting

¹ *The Chronology of the National Liberation Movement in Vietnam*, Hanoi, 1958, p. 110 (in Vietnamese).

(which Vietnamese historians regard as a plenary session of the Party Central Committee)¹ took into account the resolution of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and the situation which developed in Vietnam and decided temporarily not to advance the slogan "To defeat French imperialists", and the demand to requisition the landlords' land and distribute it to the peasants. It advocated the founding of a broad anti-imperialist popular front embracing all classes, political parties, religious organisations and nationalities in Indochina in order to struggle together for democratic rights.²

Proceeding from the resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern Ho Chi Minh, who was in China at the time, expounded the substance of the anti-imperialist popular front in the specific conditions obtaining in Indochina in the following terms: "At present the Party (i. e., the Indochinese Communist Party) should not put forth too high class claims (independence, Chamber of Deputies, etc.). To do so is to fall into Japanese fascists' trap. The Party must lay claim to the democratic rights, freedom of organisation and meeting, freedom of press and speech, general amnesty of political prisoners, and struggle for the legality of the Party. To achieve these aims, the Party must strive to organise a broad national democratic front. Not only should this front be composed of Vietnamese but also of progressive French, not only must it include various strata of working people but also the national bourgeoisie."³ The July Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee inaugurated a new stage in the Vietnamese revolution. Its decisions meant more flexible tactics. The Party relied on the workers and peasants as the main force and tried to win as many allies as it could, even if they were vacillating and temporary, in its struggle against the more overt manifestations of colonialism. It strove to make full use of all legal and semi-legal methods of propaganda and agitation among the masses and to mobilise them for the struggle for a united national front.

¹ *Thirty Years...*, p. 50.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

The decisions of the July 1936 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee were nevertheless bound to create certain difficulties for the Communists. In its documents the Comintern noted the vacillation and indecision of fellow-travellers who had penetrated the ICP as a result of the mistakes made during the formation of the Party. There were relapses into vacillation after the July Plenary Meeting of the Party's Central Committee. Failing to understand the need to adopt a new attitude to potential allies some Communists slid to "leftist" positions. Others, who incorrectly interpreted the temporary rejection of the slogan to fight the French imperialism and requisition landed estates, identified it with repudiation of the main objective—liberation from the imperialist yoke and eradication of feudal survivals.

A serious danger emanated also from the Trotskyite groups which were fairly influential, particularly in the south. Their programme narrowed the scope of the democratic movement, scaring away from it the middle strata of the urban and rural population, the national bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia.

With the victory of the Popular Front in France in May 1936 the colonial regime in Indochina became somewhat less rigid. The French government decided to send a commission to the colonies to study the living conditions of the population. The Indochinese Communist Party came out in favour of convening an Indochinese Congress which would represent all sections of the population and communicate their demands to the commission. The Party initiated a mass campaign that spread to many provinces. By the beginning of 1937, however, this movement in effect petered out. Firstly, the colonial administration opposed it in every way. Secondly, the Trotskyites' opposition to the participation of the Vietnamese bourgeoisie in the organisational committee concerned with preparing the Congress caused representatives of the national bourgeois to quit this body. Thirdly, the Communist Party itself was to a certain extent trying to narrow the participation of the non-communist forces in the leadership of the movement for a united national front.

The international communist movement did a great deal

to help the Indochinese Communist Party to overcome its left-sectarian errors.

The Popular Front Government in France amnestied political prisoners in Indochina, and in the autumn and winter of 1936 thousands of Communists were released from the prisons of Puolo Kondor and Shon La. These were steeled fighters who joined the Party's local branches and leading bodies thus stimulating the efforts of Party organisations to mobilise the masses and overcome left-deviation tendencies.

At its March 1937 Plenary Meeting the Central Committee discussed the question of more effective use of legal forms of struggle. It underscored the need for a more flexible approach and diverse methods in legal work in order to bring a larger number of people into the mass organisations guided by the Party. The Meeting also noted that the formation of mass legal and semi-legal organisations should not be approached dogmatically: they should be established with due consideration for specific conditions and the mentality of the masses not only in one or another part of the country, but also in every town, industrial enterprise and so forth.

These decisions were carried into effect and invigorated the mass struggle which in the first place boosted the campaign for the formation of the democratic front of Indochina (1936-1939). In addition to legal communist groups, the democratic front united several non-proletarian organisations with a membership consisting of Frenchmen, professionals, workers, petty traders, etc.

The democratic front was influential among the masses, which is borne out by the fact that it won the 1937 elections to the Chamber of People's Representatives of Central Vietnam, and its representatives were appointed to the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and General Secretary. In 1938 democratic front candidates won 15 seats in the Chamber of Representatives of North Vietnam, and the same year they won several seats in the elections to the Supreme Council for Economy and Finance of Indochina. But in 1939 the front was defeated in the elections to the Colonial Council of South Vietnam. "We were subjective," The Vietnamese Communists later admitted, "did not lay bare the Trot-

skyites' schemes, and tended to belittle the work of agitating the grass-root masses."¹

In view of the situation that was taking shape in the world the Communist Party had to amend its programme of struggle for a united front. War had begun in Europe, and in Asia the Japanese imperialists had launched a large-scale offensive in China thus creating a threat to Indochina. Taking all these factors into account a Plenary Meeting of the Party's Central Committee which took place in November 1939 on the initiative of Nguen Van Cu, Pham Dong Luu and Le Duan, decided to found a united anti-imperialist front of the peoples of Indochina "in order to unify various strata of people, social classes, and Indochinese nationalists, and direct the spearhead of the revolution against fascist imperialism".²

Evaluating the situation created by the outbreak of the Second World War, the Plenary Meeting underlined that at the moment the national danger was especially serious. Observing that the liquidation of imperialist and feudal oppression remained the main task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Vietnam, it said that the Party should view all the objectives of this revolution in the light of the struggle against fascism. "From the standpoint of national liberation, considering the national interest as supreme, all the problems of the revolution, even that of land, must be solved according to this aim. That is why, while advocating the Indochinese Anti-Imperialist National United Front, the bourgeois democratic revolution only confiscated the lands of the landlords who betrayed the national interest."³

It is important to note that prior to Nazi Germany's attack on the USSR, both inside the Party and among the population there were certain misconceptions of the situation in the world. In order to combat erroneous views the Party circulated two important documents, "Contemporary Policy" and "The Soviet Union is Dedicated to Peace", which underscored that the USSR pursued a consistent peace policy and urged complete unity of views on the world situation among the Party.

¹ *Thirty Years...*, p. 58.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

This stand of the ICP was in keeping with the propositions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern concerning the support of the USSR and the employment of conflicts between imperialist blocs in mobilising the masses for a determined struggle against imperialism.

The course of events made it necessary for the Vietnamese Communists to brace themselves for a fight against fascism. This issue, which was set forth in the decisions of the July (1936) Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee was couched in more precise terms in the decisions of the November (1939) Plenary Meeting.

In June 1940 the Nazis occupied France, and in September the Japanese militarists were in Indochina. Consequently, the Communist Party had to operate in new conditions which required other forms and methods of struggle. The next, Seventh Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee (October 1940) made it clear that the aim of the united national anti-imperialist front was to fight against the Japanese and French colonialists. It once again confirmed the need temporarily to withdraw the slogan calling for the distribution of landed estates among the peasants which was put forward at the preceding plenary meeting.

In view of the growth of the mass movement, including armed actions against the Japanese and French oppression,¹ the Plenary Meeting decided that the Party should prepare for an armed uprising, and in the following months armed uprisings against the invaders flared up in various parts of the country.

The Party drew the necessary lessons from these unsuccessful actions. In the spring of 1941 it began the painstaking work to build up clandestine organisations called Societies for the Salvation of the Homeland. They brought together various patriotic forces willing to fight against Japanese and French oppression. This work enhanced the Party's prestige among the masses, among the nationalistic petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia.

The results of this period in the Party's activity were summed up at the Eighth Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee which took place in May 1941 on the initiative

¹ The Japanese occupying forces left intact the local French colonial administration up to the spring of 1945.

of Ho Chi Minh. The meeting called for a truly broad and powerful front of struggle against the Japanese militarists and the French colonialists who collaborated with them. It observed in this connection: "For the moment the partial and class interests must be subordinated to the national problem. If the independence and freedom of the whole nation could not be recovered, not only the whole nation would be further condemned to slavery, but the partial and class interests would be lost for ever."¹ The meeting decided to establish the League for the Independence of Vietnam (the Viet Minh). The tasks set by this Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee were particularly important. They stimulated the development of the national liberation movement, directed the main blow against the fascist invaders, inspired the Party and the entire nation in the struggle to expel the Japanese militarists and the French colonialists and paved the way to the triumph of the August 1945 Revolution.

The Comintern's theoretical substantiation of the need to create a united front found its practical expression in the activity of the Indochinese Communist Party and then of the Vietnam Workers' Party throughout the struggle for the victory of the national liberation movement in North Vietnam.

After its Seventh Congress the Comintern's links with the revolutionary movement in Vietnam began to weaken due to objective reasons, and beginning with 1940 they practically ceased to exist. But the Indochinese Communists, relying on the strategy worked out by the Comintern, continued their fight in the right direction. It was a difficult period, and although there were miscalculations, it ended in victory.

From 1941 to 1945 the Indochinese Communist Party worked hard to create a base for and strengthen the united national front, politically educate the masses and raise revolutionary armed forces. For the Party cadres it was a period of intensive study of Marxism-Leninism, particularly Lenin's teaching on the proletarian revolution.

"It is absolutely clear," observed Le Duan, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of

¹ *Thirty Years...*, p. 70.

Vietnam, "that if in the period from 1940 to 1945 the Party had not launched an armed struggle and had not organised uprisings in different parts of the country, if it had not created revolutionary bases, it could not have raised the movement for the salvation of the homeland to such a level. On the other hand, if in the favourable situation which had taken shape we continued to rely on the armed forces and confined ourselves to an armed struggle, if we relied only on the mountainous regions and villages and had not hastened to mobilise millions of working people, had not radically reorganised all our political and armed forces to deal a devastating blow at the enemy's nerve centres in the towns, we could have very well missed this sole favourable opportunity in those August days of 1945."¹

The line pursued by the Indochinese Communist Party in its preparations for and the accomplishment of the August revolution was a result of the application of the collective experience of the international revolutionary movement generalised in the decisions and instructions of the Communist International. The ICP drew on this experience in its struggle in the conditions of a colonial and semi-feudal country and brought the Vietnamese revolution to a victorious end.

Dwelling on the victory of the August revolution President Ho Chi Minh wrote: "Not only the toilers, the people of Vietnam, but also the toilers and the oppressed in other countries can be proud of the fact that in this case, for the first time in the history of peoples of the colonies and semi-colonial countries, a Party which was only 15 years old successfully led the revolution and took power into its hands throughout the country."²

The August revolution in Vietnam did much to strengthen the world national liberation forces. It reaffirmed the incontrovertible truth that the national revolution is a component of the world revolution. Only by relying on the international communist movement can a Communist party bring its struggle to a victorious conclusion. "Imbued with

¹ Le Duan, *Selected Articles and Speeches (1970-1975)*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 339-40 (in Russian).

² Ho Chi Minh, *Collected Works*, Hanoi, 1960, p. 356 (in Vietnamese).

a deep sense of proletarian internationalism our Party upon its formation began to work for unity *with the world proletariat, with the oppressed nations*, regarding this unity as a basic principle, as a decisive factor making for the success of the revolution in our country," wrote General Secretary Le Duan.¹ Pursuing this line the Vietnamese Communists have been able to rely on the mounting support of the world revolutionary forces at all stages of the struggle for Vietnamese freedom and independence and in building socialism.

The collectively worked out theoretical principles of the international communist movement not only helped to create the Indochinese Communist Party, but also became its guide to further action when the Comintern was already defunct. After the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the world socialist system the Vietnamese Communists strengthened their links with the world communist movement. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam became a full-fledged member of the socialist community. Today, following the full victory of the Vietnamese people and the formation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, these links have become even more durable and diverse. And as in the past they rest on the community of aims in the struggle for socialism and communism.

¹ Le Duan, *Selected Articles and Speeches (1965-1970)*, Moscow, 1971, p. 190 (in Russian).

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